WE DO OUR PART

RAZORCAKE

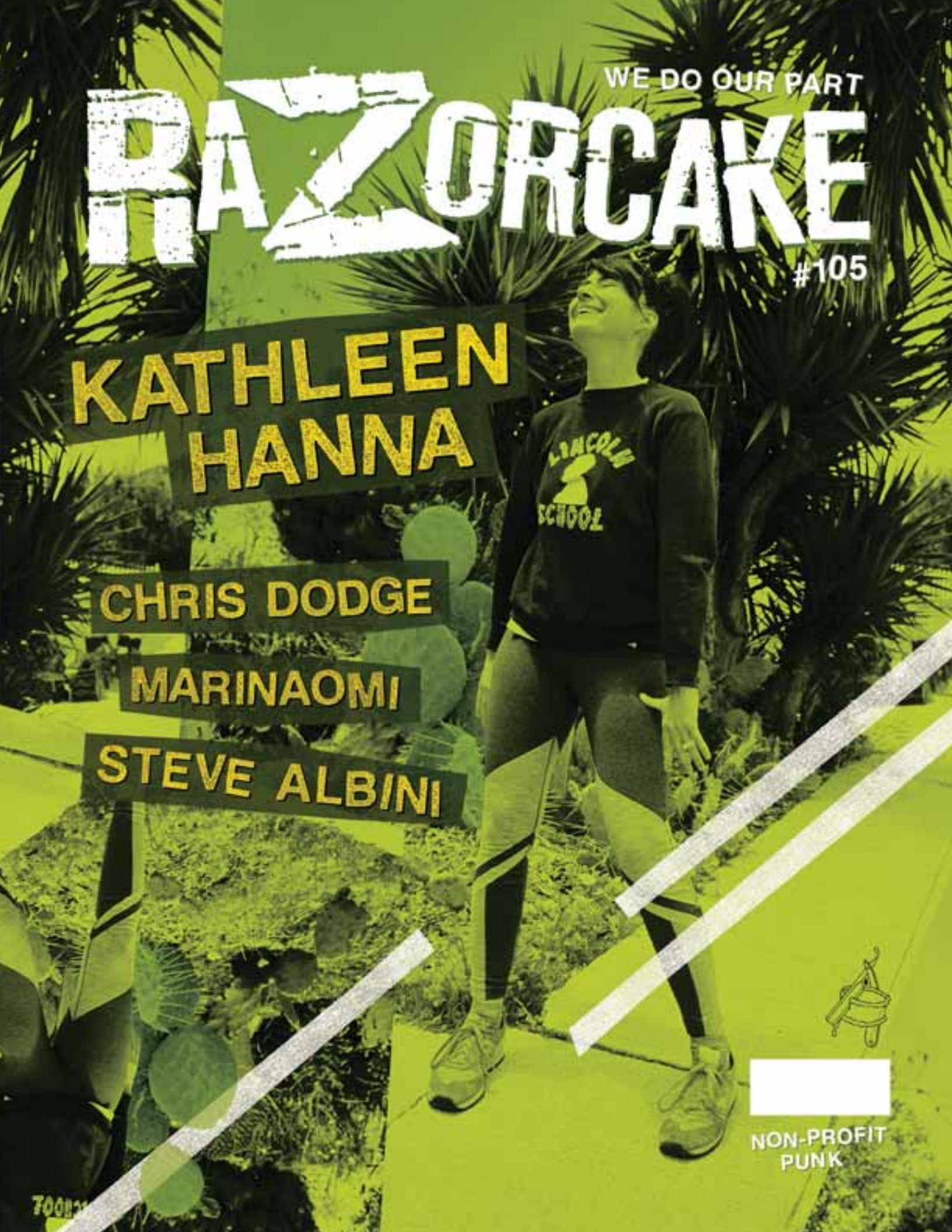
#105

KATHLEEN HANNA

CHRIS DODGE

MARINAOMI

STEVE ALBINI



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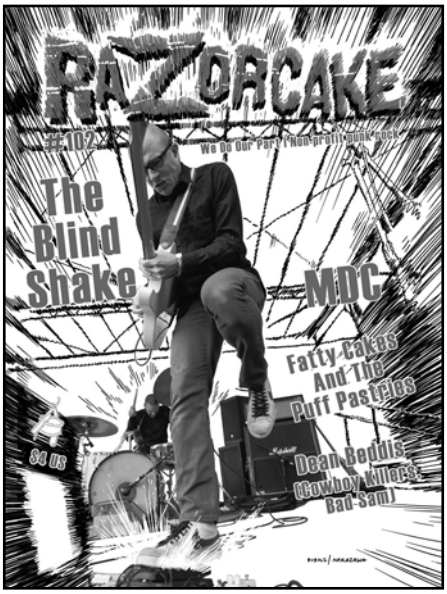

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Anyone has the potential to be a Razorcake contributor. If you don't see or hear what you'd like covered, lend us a helping hand. If you're knowledgeable about DIY punk, are open to the editing of your work, can meet deadlines, and follow instructions, we'll consider your contribution. We have openings for interviews, articles, podcasts, photos, comics, web columns, videos, reviews, and editorial illustrations. All creative content is done on a volunteer basis.

Razorcake does not tolerate racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, or ableist bullshit—and we've held these ethics since our start in 2001. Diversity makes us a better punk organization. We're encouraging people who are marginalized—by gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, and personal experience—to submit material to Razorcake. Let's work with each other.

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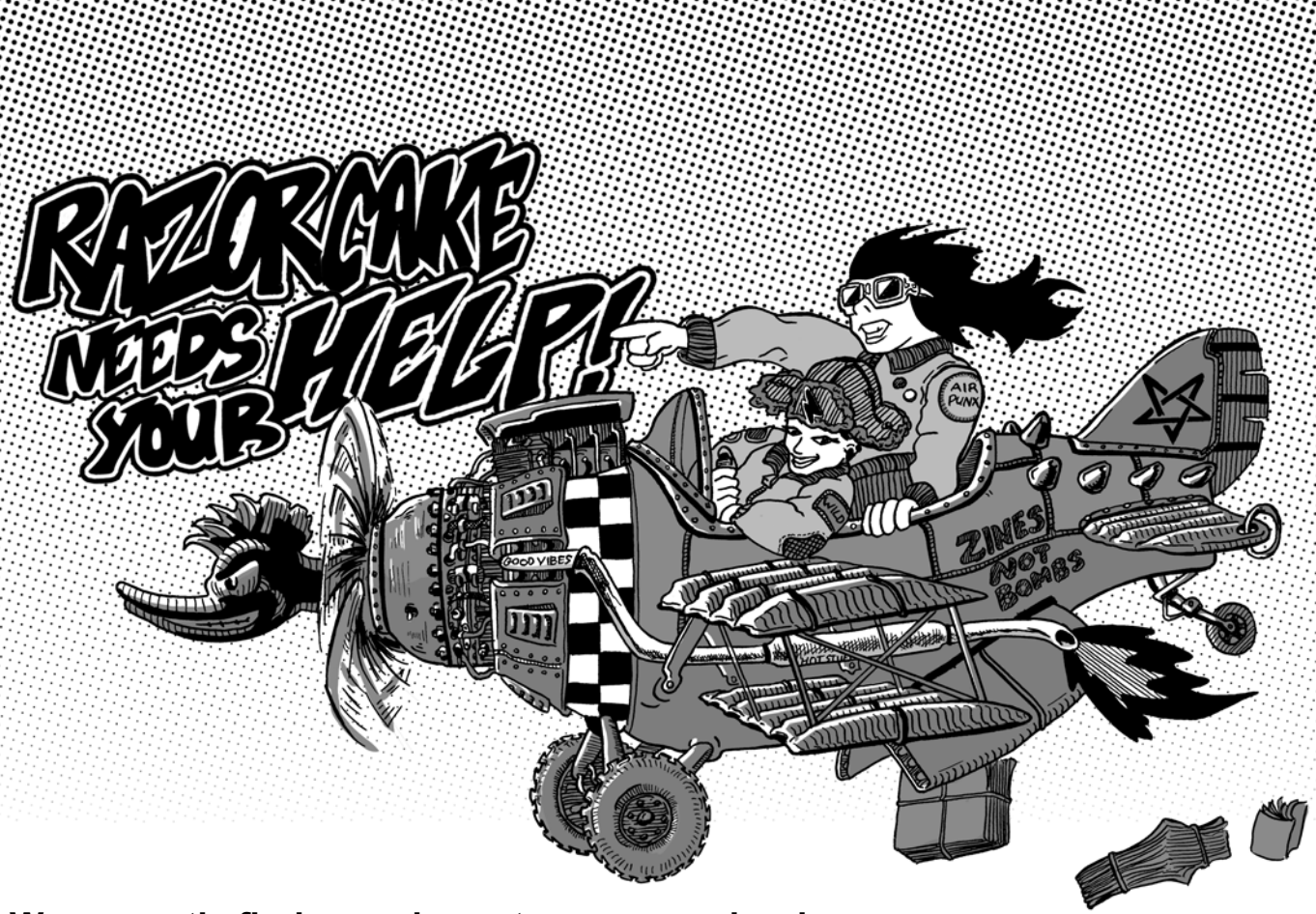

We currently find ourselves at a crossroads where quality independent publishing is more important than ever, yet distribution is at an all time low.

Consumer confidence is verging on consumer cockiness, yet independent zines and labels are shutting down left and right due to lack of support.

We know there are people out there who would totally appreciate Razorcake but don't know it exists. There are so many spaces (such as: bars, community centers, music venues, record stores, book stores, breweries, recording studios, punk houses, tattoo and pizza parlors, any independent enterprise) that would be interested in receiving copies to give out to their customers.

LET'S CLOSE THE GAP!

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Please consider sponsoring a space to receive complimentary issues to give away for free by covering the cost of us printing and shipping the magazines. A $150 donation will sponsor a space to receive 25 copies of every issue for an entire year.
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"A Cynical Scan" b/w "I Wasn't Wrong"

A quick scan from a cynic of this issue's cover interviews could easily be a dismissive: "What the shit? Is it still the '90s? Can't you chucklefucks cover something contemporary? Nostalgia's a disease."

Here is my rebuttal. I personally have a super shitty memory. A lot of the '90s I lived through and remember *suuuuucked*. None of the folks on the cover have ever been interviewed by Razorcake before. It would be dumb to turn down opportunities as they present themselves. Let's peek behind the curtain to see how this issue came together.

Exhibit A: During Alice Bag's record release party for the amazing *Blueprint*, the band ripped into "77," a song about the seventy-seven cents on the dollar that women earn for the same work as men. Alice was joined onstage by Allison Wolfe (Ex Stains), Lysa Flores (Stay At Home Bomb), Teri Gender Bender (Le Butcherettes), and Kathleen Hanna (The Julie Ruin). What an unexpected treat! Unbeknownst to me, before heading onstage, Allison and Ever Velasquez (The Girl About Town) were chatting backstage and Kathleen asked Ever if she could do her a favor and hold her purse when she was on stage. Not long after the show, Ever got the thumbs up from Kathleen to be interviewed by us. (Ever and I recently interviewed Allison Wolfe and Jaime Hernandez.) As I stated in the first line of our interview, I really didn't think Kathleen would agree to it, but couldn't be more stoked with our long talk. It's also true Kathleen made brazen sexual solicitations to our (admittedly dreamy) photocopier.

Exhibit B: Juan Espinosa's been part of the Razorcake family for a decade. He's reviewed hundreds of records, does podcasts and DJs for Razorcake Hearts Drinking Beer and Listening to Records regularly, and runs RZC's World Cup pool. However, he's never conducted an interview in these pages. Chris Dodge is largely responsible for promoting powerviolence worldwide—both through Slap A Ham Records and currently in Trappist. Juan's a huge fan. Here's the complicated scenario: Juan asked Chris if he'd be down to be interviewed by Razorcake. Chris said "yes." At an agreed-upon time, Juan, Chris, and I sat down in the studio in the backyard. We waited an hour for a stupid computer to update, beers were cracked, and Juan disclosed he uses a music app on his phone to inform him exactly what songs he hears in public, so his hate is well informed.

Exhibit C: MariNaomi contacted Razorcake out of the blue about doing a column within forty-eight hours of a beloved columnist bowing out. I'd been a fan of Mari's ever since we'd crossed paths at L.A. Zine Fest, again at a Vermin On The Mount reading, and also having read two of her autobiographical comics *Dragon's Breath* and *Turning Japanese*. If you want to be an asshole, you can pull the nepotism card on me for interviewing someone in Razorcake's columnist corps. I just wanted to know more about a self-supporting, super-talented artist who's been drawing regularly since the late '90s, and currently lives nearby.

Exhibit D: Steve Albini. When Nardwuar interviews punk folks, I always perk up, especially when that person played bass on Pegboy's *Fore* EP.

My guess was these four people—who each have multiple decades of experience in valuable Venn diagrams of punk—would have interesting stories to tell and compelling insights to share that are relevant today.

I wasn't wrong.

–Todd Taylor

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Cover design by Lauren Denitzio
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The important thing is to adopt a stance of always being deadly serious about protecting yourself.

–Haruki Murakami
IQ84

Kathleen and Alice at The Echo
Wendy Lau

THANK YOU: ***"I've got another good one for you, we are turning cursive letters into knives" thanks to Lauren Denitzio for the cover and Chynna Monforte for the cover photos; Knots of poisonous nationalism, apartheid, bigotry, and religion thanks to Bone Dust for Donna's illo.; Monsters waiting their turn for a dialup connection thanks to Bill Pinkel for Jim's illo.; In a just world, weird people win and Foreigner always loses thanks to Alex Barrett for Nørb's illo.; Chocolate chip cookie origins and Tour de France tragedy thanks to Shane Milner for Dale's illo.; Crackling bullwhips of downed power lines on fuel tankers thanks to Roque for the Puro Pinche Poetry illo.; The Rhythm Chicken visually explains how to take merch across borders for weekend shows without paying customs thanks to Steve Thueson's illo.; Someone tall took that picture or else Nardwuar's got a drone thanks to "courtesy of Nardwuar" for the Steve Albini photo; Said with affection, those chones sorta look like a T-bone steak thanks to Steve Larder for Jennifer's illo.; "I'm not yr bullet proof vest / Or yr visa card / I ain't got no candy for you," thanks to Ever Velasquez, Lauren Denitzio, Chynna Monforte, Deb Frazin, Eric Nakamura, Chris Sikich, Tricia Ramos, Jennifer Whiteford, and David Ensminger for the Kathleen Hanna interview, layout, photos, and archival scans; "Moshed hard at the show / Now I got fungus on my toe / My youth crew's always packin' / Fast actin' Tinactin" thanks to Juan Espinosa, Matt Average, Albert Licano, and Eric Baskauskas for the Chris Dodge interview, photos, and layout; A can of snakes filled with children thanks to Rachel Murray Framingheddu and Dylan Davis for the MariNaomi photos and layout.***

"Highest possible recommendation if you're fucking punk at all." –Juan Espinosa, Hank Wood And The Hammerheads, Self-titled LP. Thanks to 105's rotation of music, zine, and book reviewers: Sean Arenas, Sal Lucci, Ty Stranglehold, Art Ettinger, Ryan Nichols, Matt Werts, Kayla Greet, Chris Terry, Rich Cocksedge, Kurt Morris, Paul J. Comeau, Indiana Laub, Nørb, Tim Brooks, Mike Frame, The Lord Kveldulfr, Matt Seward, Camylle Reynolds, Sean Koepenick, Matt Average, Chad Williams, Mark Twistworthy, Keith Rosson, Steve Adamyk, Garrett Barnwell, Nicole X, Billups Allen, Jimmy Alvarado, Ian Wise, Anna Farr, Michael T. Fournier, Kevin Dunn, Jim Woster, Jim Joyce, Jimmy Cooper, Tricia Ramos, Craven Rock, and Iggy Nicklbottum.

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RAZORCAKE

Issue #105
August / September 2018

This issue is dedicated to the memories of Steve Soto (Adolescents), Tony Kinman (Dils), Nick Knox (Cramps), and Mike Ventura (Black Jax)

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The following folks stepped forward to help us do our part over the past two months. Without their help, Razorcake wouldn't be what it is.
Todd Taylor, Daryl Gussin, Kari Hamanaka, Rishbha Bhagi, Ever Velasquez, Nicole Macias, Donna Ramone, Derek Whipple, Dayna Castillo, Matthew Hart, Chris Baxter, Steve Couch, Megan Pants, Marcos Siref, Griffin Wynne, Seth Swaaley, Sean Carswell, Felizon Vidad, Skinny Dan, Katy Spining, Jimmy Alvarado, Yvonne Drazan, Dale Drazan, Josh Rosa, Robert El Diablo, Mark McBride, Alice Bag, Marty Ploy, Rachel Murray Framingheddu, Rene Navarro, Billy Kostka III, Samantha McBride, Jason Willis, Janeth Galaviz, Matt Average, Joe Dana, Juan Espinosa, Meztli Hernandez, Sean Arenas, Adrian Salas, Adrian Chi, Aaron Kovacs, Julia Smut, Jenn Witte, Dave Eck, Tim Burkert, Jeff Proctor, Nighthawk, Toby Tober, Sal Lucci, Jennifer Federico, Kevin Dunn, Maggie Egan, Jennifer Whiteford, Kayla Greet, Steve Thueson, Cassie J. Sneider, Bill Pinkel, Kurt Morris, Laura Collins, Eric Baskauskas, Bianca, Russ Van Cleave, John Di Marco, Michael T. Fournier, Simon Sotelo, Susan de Place, Timothee de Place, John Miskelly, Genesis Bautista, Andy Garcia, Camylle Reynolds, Craven Rock, Replay Dave, Adam Ali, Chris Devlin, Emma Johnson, Tim Brooks, Patrick Houdek, Louis Jacinto, Chris Boarts Larson, J.V. McDonough, Noah Wolf, Jon Mule, Chris Terry, Jackie Rusted, Art Fuentes, Mitch Clem, Dylan Davis, Becky Minjarez, Keith Rosson, Megan Razzetti, Paul Silver, Matt Werts, Stacy Medina, David Ensminger, Danny Rust, Jamie L. Rotante, Daisy Noemi, George Lopez, Eden Kittiver, Jessee Zeroxed, Garrett Barnwell, Nørb, Chris Mason, Tim Jamison, Codey Richards, Amina Cruz, Kiyoshi Nakazawa, Nicole X, Shane Milner, James Rosario, Michelle Kirk, Josh Brown, Martin Wong, Jules Weiss, Lorien Smith, Matty Weaver, Robert Ibarra, Tom Reardon, Rosie Gonce, Elly Dallas, Benny Hope, Clay Doran, Sophia Zarders, Rick V, Jenn Paige Gordon, Ollie Mikse, Phil Gerigscott, Charlie Murphy, and Danny Keller Meyer.

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Enriching Lives Los Angeles County Arts Commission

This issue of *Razorcake* is made possible in part by grants from the City of Los Angeles, Department of Cultural Affairs, is supported by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors through the Los Angeles Arts Commission.

I believe borders are bullshit.

No Peace on Stolen Land

My mom is a Holocaust denier.

In America, that means something very different than it does in the Arab world. Her stance causes me deep shame, and I often feel upset, offended, and dismayed with her. It's jarring and terrible to hear my own mom claim a genocide is propaganda. In the modern Arab world, however, Holocaust denial is not so much an actual belief as it is a racist political statement. My brother and I confronted her about it once and she admitted she did believe the Holocaust happened—she just hates Israel for what they've done to Palestine so much that she's become a hateful xenophobe. Many Arabs like my mom just flippantly say they don't believe in the Holocaust out of bigoted Arab nationalism.

From as far back as I have memories, my parents would say things like, "We need to stand with our brothers and sisters in Palestine." Whoever was giving the boring weekly lecture at the mosque would remind us to pray for our brethren in Palestine. When boxes were put out at Eid prayer to collect zakat (alms), there was often a separate one that read "For Palestine."

On the nightly news, they only seemed to discuss Israel. In school, we were taught about the country of Israel. My history teacher in high school, sick of student misspellings, had up a sign that read, "Israel is real, Isreal is not." It was a long while before I fully figured out that Israel was considered a country, Palestine was not, and they basically occupied the same space. I was immensely confused.

A terribly condensed history of the region is: In the early to mid-nineteenth century, the piece of land we are discussing was part of the Ottoman Empire. At the time, it was mostly Arab Muslims, with significant populations of Christians (Arab ones), Druze, Circassians, and some Jews. There was no national identity, only clans of families or Bedouin tribes. The wealthy were in the urban center, chilling with the Ottomans. The rest were rural, poor, and largely ungoverned.

Jewish people in Europe at the end of the nineteenth century were suffering because of anti-Semitic assholes. In 1896, a French Jewish man named Theodor Herzl penned *Der Judenstaat*, "The Jewish State," which established Zionism, the political movement to create a Jewish nation. He and 250 of his followers went to Switzerland the following year, established the World Zionist Organization, and made plans to take the entire area around Jerusalem as their new nation (and conspiracy theorists credit this as being the secret meeting that turned them into reptilians that now secretly rule the world). At the same time, Jewish persecution grew in countries like Russia, Poland, and Ukraine, prompting their need to flee.

Waves of white, European Jews poured into the Arab region, which at the time only had a population of about 450,000, consisting largely of poor farmers. At this point, there is still no such thing as Palestine, and no one calling themselves Palestinian. Then colonization began before the native population was even fully aware of it.

A charismatic World Zionist Organization member named Chaim Weizmann fled Russia for Great Britain. He managed to lobby their government into making the Balfour Declaration, a 1917 document which promised the Jewish colonizers their British imperial backing to create a "national home." Meanwhile, it was World War I and this declaration was made mid-*Lawrence of Arabia*, i.e., when Great Britain was fighting the Ottoman Empire and the indigenous tribes of Arabs were caught in the middle. Arab-nationalist movements start around about this time, while Great Britain and France colonized the entire Middle East.

The League of Nations awarded Great Britain the area in 1922, there was an Arab revolt against British colonial rule in 1936, and World War II brought along the Holocaust and increased pressure in Europe to establish a Jewish state somewhere else. In 1947, Great Britain ended their imperial rule of the region, and the United Nations General Assembly voted to create the independent states of Israel and Palestine, with Jerusalem being separately controlled by an international regime. Arabs immediately rejected getting the shitty apartheid-end of the deal and civil war erupted. Israel quickly took over more land than the UN originally gave them, 700,000 now-named Palestinians were forcibly displaced, many Arab Jews moved to Israel in the aftermath, and everything has been an absolute shitshow ever since.

The myth of this being a Jews versus Muslims battle going back thousands of years is completely false. My grandma remembers when the civil war began. This conflict didn't even have as much to do with religion as it did persecution and colonialism. Gaza is called Gaza because it was an area taken by Egypt in the civil war, and Jordan attempted to help Palestine by taking the West Bank. But in 1967, Israel took the West Bank from Jordan and Gaza from Egypt. This is also when Israel gained control of the area with the famous Western Wall (of note: calling it the "Wailing Wall" came from Christians making fun of the way Jews cried there).

The wall itself is part of an ancient retaining wall for the Temple Mount, where the Bible claims the two original Jewish Temples once stood but were destroyed by the Babylonians and then the Roman Empire (in 587 BCE and 70 CE, respectively), hence the crying. Muslims believe the wall is also the site where the Prophet Muhammed tied his mythical steed on his journey to Jerusalem that ends with his death and ascent to Heaven. It was located in the historic Moroccan district of Jerusalem. Three days after gaining ground in 1967, Israel demolished the 770-year-old Moroccan quarter so the Western Wall would have a nice, open plaza.

Nationalism has poisoned everyone.

When I was eleven, I went to Jordan and swam in the Dead Sea. It felt like syrup and the buoyancy made me wonder if that's what walking on the moon felt like. My brother and I were being stupid on nearby dangerous playground equipment and he skinned his shin. Trying to wade into the super-salty Dead Sea made his shin burn and I felt terrible. I pointed to the mountains and hills in the distance and asked about them. My aunt told me the hazy land I could see across the way was Israel. I wanted to see Israel, so I asked if we could drive over. My aunt laughed at my innocence and told me we couldn't drive there. They wouldn't allow us to visit. "Unless you walk in as an American without me, then maybe you can visit." In that moment, I believed borders were bullshit. In this moment, I believe borders are bullshit.

In 2007, Hamas took control of the Gaza Strip. Hamas is an acronym for the Arabic phrase "Islamic Resistance Movement." They've killed Israeli civilians, participated in suicide bombings, and publically said some fucked-up anti-Semitic statements in their war against Israel. But they are possibly the largest aid provider to Palestine. 85% of their funds are used on social services for Palestinians, like orphanages, women's groups, libraries, and sports clubs. I imagine it's hard to take a strong moral stance against help when 90% of Gaza's water is not safe to drink.

In 2018, The White House moved the American Embassy to Israel and declared Jerusalem to be Israel's capital. Now why the fuck would the deeply Christian United

BONE DUST

This massive mess of nationalism, apartheid, bigotry, and religion is what we have now, and it's all so tangled with no hope of getting the knots out.

States do this? Why did Senator Lindsay Graham say, "If you have a problem with Jerusalem being the capital of Israel, take it up with God"? When exactly did God say the Jewish people should have this patch of land, inhabited with Arabs, and set up an apartheid? Turns out, they are misquoting the Old Testament.

Ezekiel 37:21-22 reads: "Then say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again." This is a Christian prophecy, which when fulfilled, is part of what leads to the end of days.

Only this is all interpretation. Biblical Israel and its mountains are not where it's located now. The Bible never said where it was, except that it goes from the Mediterranean Sea to west of the Jordan River (and when Republicans say "Biblical Israel," they're referring to some Imperial British maps from the late 1800s). This prophecy has to do with the biblical tribe of Israelites, which modern Jews and Samaritans originally trace their ancestry. Evangelical Christians, especially in America, back Israel not because they like Jewish people, but because they believe supporting this plan will bring Jesus back. That's why the U.S. embassy moved, to have us all die in the Rapture.

This massive mess of nationalism, apartheid, bigotry, and religion is what we have now, and it's all so tangled with no hope of getting the knots out. Because when you take it all in at once, it doesn't make sense. As a researcher, it doesn't make sense. As a historian, it doesn't make sense. As an Arab, it really doesn't make sense. As a human being without faith, it doesn't make sense. But as an oppressor, an imperialist, a colonizer—it clearly made perfect sense—and leaves behind a legacy of ignorant pride so infected, daughters are ashamed of their mothers.

–Donna Ramone

"Comedy is a modern disease in horror."

THAT'S THE DIFFERENCE

The Neon Ones, Part 8

"It's kind of rehashing stuff that really isn't significant anymore."

That's how the profile of my late cousin begins. Tucked in a pile of movie magazines Mark had written for in the late '70s and early '80s, I found a zine called *The Fright Factor*, published by Armando Munoz out of Carson City, Nevada in 1990.

The Fright Factor is a black-and-white zine from the early days of desktop publishing printed on newspaper and nicely bound. It's filled with interviews and photos from horror movies and reflects Munoz's passion for all things supernatural.

The Fright Factor leads with my cousin's profile, which is filled with things I didn't know about his career, to say nothing of his hopes and dreams for the future. Some of those projects didn't pan out, hence Mark's terse opening statement. Some of those projects were cut short by his suicide six years later in 1996.

But the project my cousin was referring to was the screenplay he wrote for *Child's Play 2*, the horror franchise that featured the homicidal doll Chucky. "The producers and United Artists, who owned the film at the time, wanted a second draft basically as insurance," Mark explains.

They'd hired Don Mancini, co-writer of the original movie, to write the sequel. Then they hired Mark to simultaneously write the sequel as a Plan B. This wasn't a collaboration. Mancini would eventually write all six of the sequels and Mark's screenplay was never used.

"The action takes place in an old, gothic boarding school run by nuns… The time covers Easter break, and the school is fairly unpopulated. Only about twelve kids whose families can't or won't take them home for the holidays are there, plus a skeleton staff."

That sounds like a movie I'd like to see. It's not hard to imagine a villainous headmaster, a creepy groundskeeper, and Chucky picking off terrified students one at a time…

Mark's screenplay sounds somewhat similar to the latest iteration of the franchise, *The Cult of Chucky*, which takes place in a mental institution. (I haven't seen the movie or read Mark's screenplay.) However, Mark's screenplay had a personal touch. For a brief period during his childhood, both Mark and his brother Steve were sent to boarding school, an experience that must have been strange, if not scarring, for someone born and raised in the city.

The article goes on to summarize Mark's career: his disappointment with *Neon Maniacs*, the success of *Pumpkinhead*, and plans for a sequel. Some discussion is devoted to whether *Pumpkinhead* got a fair deal from the studio, with Mark taking an "It could've been worse" approach.

"Executives get embarrassed when they have to tell their family and friends that the film they greenlighted last week is something called *Pumpkinhead*," he says. "They just don't respect and can't relate to horror."

After the many changes and delays that impacted the quality of *Neon Maniacs*, Mark was pleased with how *Pumpkinhead* came out and the reception it received from horror critics, the people he cared about the most. He was also thrilled with how the monster looked.

Mark also told Munoz about a script he had written called *Devils* about a reporter investigating L.A. biker gangs distributing drugs throughout California. "It begins as a gritty crime thriller that progresses into the supernatural."

The project was going to be an independent film produced by Michael London and directed by Joel Bender. Most intriguingly, Mark was hoping to serve as second unit director for the film and be involved with all aspects of production. This would be his apprenticeship for directing a feature of his own, which was something I didn't know he wanted to do. I knew that he had made short films when he was a student, but I had no idea it was a dream he held on to, a dream that would never come true.

*

It's sad to read about the hopes and dreams of someone who is no longer alive. There's nothing the reader can do. The possibility has been snuffed out. The dream dies with the dreamer.

Reading my cousin's words confirmed many things about his life and work that I already knew. His conversational style is professional and to the point. He's direct, opinionated and cautiously optimistic about the future. This was the man I got to know for the brief year that we both lived in North Hollywood before I moved to Arizona for graduate school and he relocated to a bigger house in Thousand Oaks.

But the surprises sting. It occurs to me there are many things he didn't share with me. Or, even worse, perhaps he did share them and I have forgotten. Mark was serious, but humble, and he was not one to talk at length about his own projects. Perhaps he'd learned, as I have, that it's best not to talk about things in the pipeline because they may never see the light of day, especially in Hollywood.

Being a writer is hard enough without people constantly asking you about projects that were delayed, fell apart, or killed. No one wants to be reminded of their failures, even if those failings are shared by nameless executives and faceless lawyers higher up the food chain.

What's most surprising, at least to me, is his take on humor in horror: he was dead set against it. He felt that humor, more often than not, cheapened the project and turned something artful into entertainment.

"Comedy is a modern disease in horror."

As an example, he used a script he'd written for television called *Buried Alive* that had been adapted from a story by David A. Davies, which doesn't sound like a real name to me. (His only other contribution to film is the 1979 movie *Gas Pump Girls*.)

Mark had written it as a feature film but when it was picked up by the USA Network, he had to edit it for television, cutting some of the nudity from the script. All in all, he received three sets of notes before it was given a final polish by the director, Frank Darabont, who would go on to direct *The Shawshank Redemption*. Darabont added some humor that Mark wasn't too crazy about:

"There are quips in *Buried Alive* that really bother me. They seem out of character and they play as lines just for the audience. I'm not saying that such lines don't get ripples of laughter and people don't enjoy them, but it comes down to the difference between a film that will stick with them and trouble them whenever they remember it, and a horror film that gives the overall feeling of just entertainment, a disposable kind of entertainment that could easily be dismissed from one's mind."

BILL PINKEL

It's sad to read about the hopes and dreams of someone who is no longer alive.

This makes me more than a little anxious about my *Neon Maniacs* sequel, which is unabashedly comedic (notice how I didn't say funny). That said, I'm not sure I agree with Mark. Recent horror movies like *Green Room* and *Get Out* use humor the way Shakespeare did: as comic relief from the drama's tension and suspense.

My sequel, which I'm calling *The Neon Ones* for obvious reasons, will be closer in style and tone to the films that Mark didn't favor: spooky stories with goofy quips. I have my reasons. 1) The best way to watch *Neon Maniacs* is to view it as an unintentional comedy, and *The Neon Ones* will operate in the same vein, using '80s tropes as if it were still somehow 1987. 2) Suicide is sad, and even a movie that aims to right the wrongs of the past requires some levity.

Happily, on the subject of sequels, Mark had a much sunnier outlook. "Sequels are great."

Nevertheless, I don't want to wake up to Mark's ghost, reprising the role of Danny Glick from *Salem's Lot*, tapping at my window, "Don't fuck up my mooooooovieeeeee!"

*

I wanted to end this on a hopeful note, but when I imagined my daughter sifting through back issues of zines for clues about my hopes and dreams, it put me in a black mood. Then something astonishing happened.

Earlier this year, several sections of *The Neon Ones* were published as an essay in *Black Candies*, an annual anthology of literary horror. At a reading for the launch of the new issue at a bookstore in Los Angeles, I played the trailer for *Neon Maniacs* and talked about my cousin's conflicted relationship with the film.

After the reading, I met Ron Gutierrez who told me he had a friend who'd love to read my essay about *Neon Maniacs*. We got in touch via Facebook and it turns out that friend was none other than Armando Munoz, the publisher of *Fright Factor*.

Armando is still involved in horror and hosts a monthly screening at Landmark's Nuart Theatre on Santa Monica Boulevard. We've communicated a bit and have plans to meet so that he can give me copies of the photos he took and audio of the interview he conducted with my cousin all those years ago. We'll talk about movies, those that scared us a long time ago and those that continue to entertain, and we'll keep Mark's dreams alive for just a little longer.

–Jim Ruland

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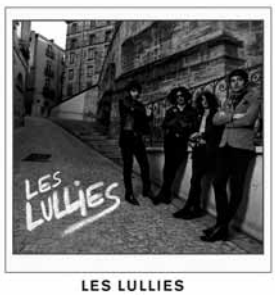
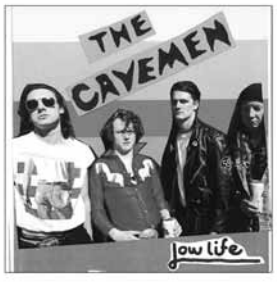


LES LULLIES
LP



THE CAVEMEN
LOWLIFE EP

HERE COME TOMMY AND THE COMMIES
LP

PRIORS
NEW PLEASURE LP

WON TON
NOT NOW
SEAL OF NAKAZAWA
FREE BIRDS
OH GOD I'M SO LONELY. SO, SO LONELY.
CHIRP
I'D RATHER BE MISERABLE WITH SOMEONE I LOVE THAN MISERABLE ALONE.
UGH!!
TRUE LOVE AT LAST! IT'S LIKE WE WERE MADE ONLY FOR EACH OTHER!
THIS IS A NIGHTMARE!! THEY DON'T GET ME!! THEY'RE CRAZY!! I GOTTA GET OUT!!
I'D BE BETTER OFF MISERABLE AND ALONE THAN MISERABLE WITH THEM. GOOD RIDDANCE.
OH GOD I'M SO LONELY. SO, SO LONELY.
CHIRP
OH HELLOOO
KN 5/18

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Richard Vain-Ex-Ponys

Gino and the Goons

Facility Men

Wood Chickens

MY EIGHTY-EIGHTH COLUMN FOR RAZORCAKE BY BEN SNAKEPIT

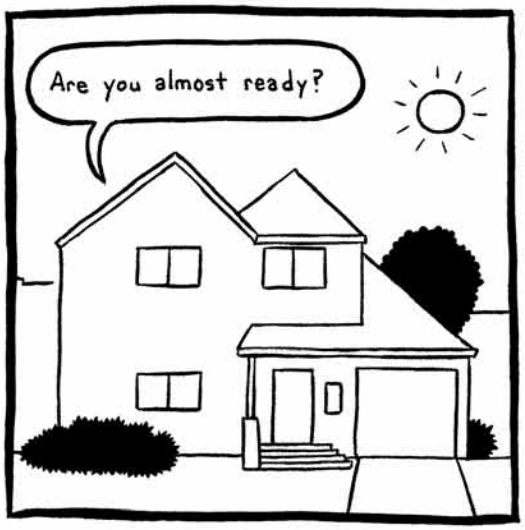
I JOINED
THE SATANIC TEMPLE
AFTER READING ABOUT THEM IN THE NEWS, I CHECKED OUT THE SEVEN TENETS OF T.S.T. THEY REALLY RESONATED WITH ME.
HMM..
THIS ISN'T THE CORNY LIBERTARIANISM OF ANTON LAVEY'S CHURCH OF SATAN. THIS IS VERY DIFFERENT.
COS: DO WHAT THOU WILT.
TST: STRIVE TO ACT WITH COMPASSION AND EMPATHY TOWARDS ALL CREATURES IN ACCORDANCE WITH REASON.
THE SEVEN TENETS
I DECIDED TO GET INVOLVED.
TST
CLICK TO JOIN
WHEN I LEARNED THERE WAS A LOCAL CHAPTER HERE IN AUSTIN, I APPLIED FOR MEMBERSHIP.
IT WAS ACTUALLY AN INVOLVED SCREENING PROCESS THAT REQUIRED SEVERAL INTERVIEWS.
I'VE BEEN A MEMBER OF THE GROUP FOR SEVERAL MONTHS NOW.
WELCOME TO OUR GROUP!
AND WHILE I JOINED FOR POLITICAL REASONS, IT HAS GROWN INTO MUCH MORE!
DON'T FORGET ABOUT THE MEETING ON SUNDAY!
MAY
I'VE MADE A LOT OF COOL NEW FRIENDS THRU T.S.T.
CHEERS!
WE HAVE SOCIAL EVENTS AND POTLUCKS JUST LIKE A REAL CHURCH.
HEY FRIENDS! I BROUGHT DEVILED EGGS!
(NYUK NYUK)
AND OF COURSE, WE DO COMMUNITY POLITICAL ACTIVISM.
THE "MENSTRUATIN' FOR SATAN" PROGRAM COLLECTS FEMININE HYGIENE PRODUCTS FOR UNDERPRIVILEGED WOMEN.
THE "UNBAPTISM" DONATES BOTTLED WATER TO A LOCAL HOMELESS SHELTER.
THE CHANCE TO ENGAGE WITH INTELLIGENT LIKE-MINDED PEOPLE IS AWESOME!
COFFEE SHOP
IF YOU WANT TO RESIST CHRISTIAN SUPREMACY, FIND OUT IF THERE'S A TST CHAPTER NEAR YOU!
SATAN IS COOL! SATAN IS OUR PAL.

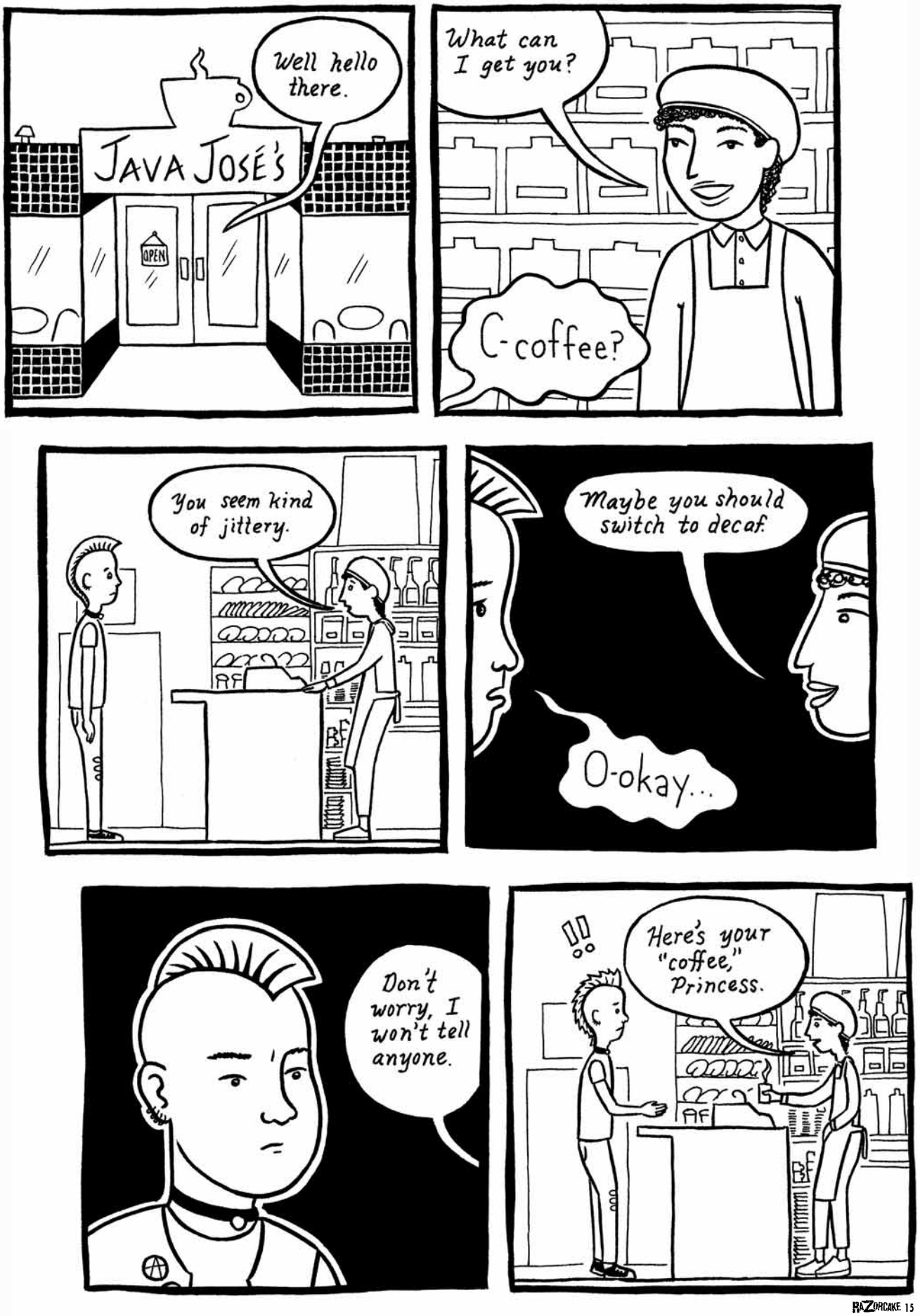
JUST TO BE CLEAR: I am not an official spokesperson for TST

BENSNAKEPIT@GMAIL.COM

ASIAN GOTH PUNKS RULE the WORLD!

BY MARINAOMI




Well hello there.
JAVA JOSÉ'S
OPEN
What can I get you?
C-coffee?
You seem kind of jittery.
Maybe you should switch to decaf.
O-okay...
Don't worry, I won't tell anyone.
!!
Here's your "coffee," Princess.

Christ, what a fucking evolutionary dead end.

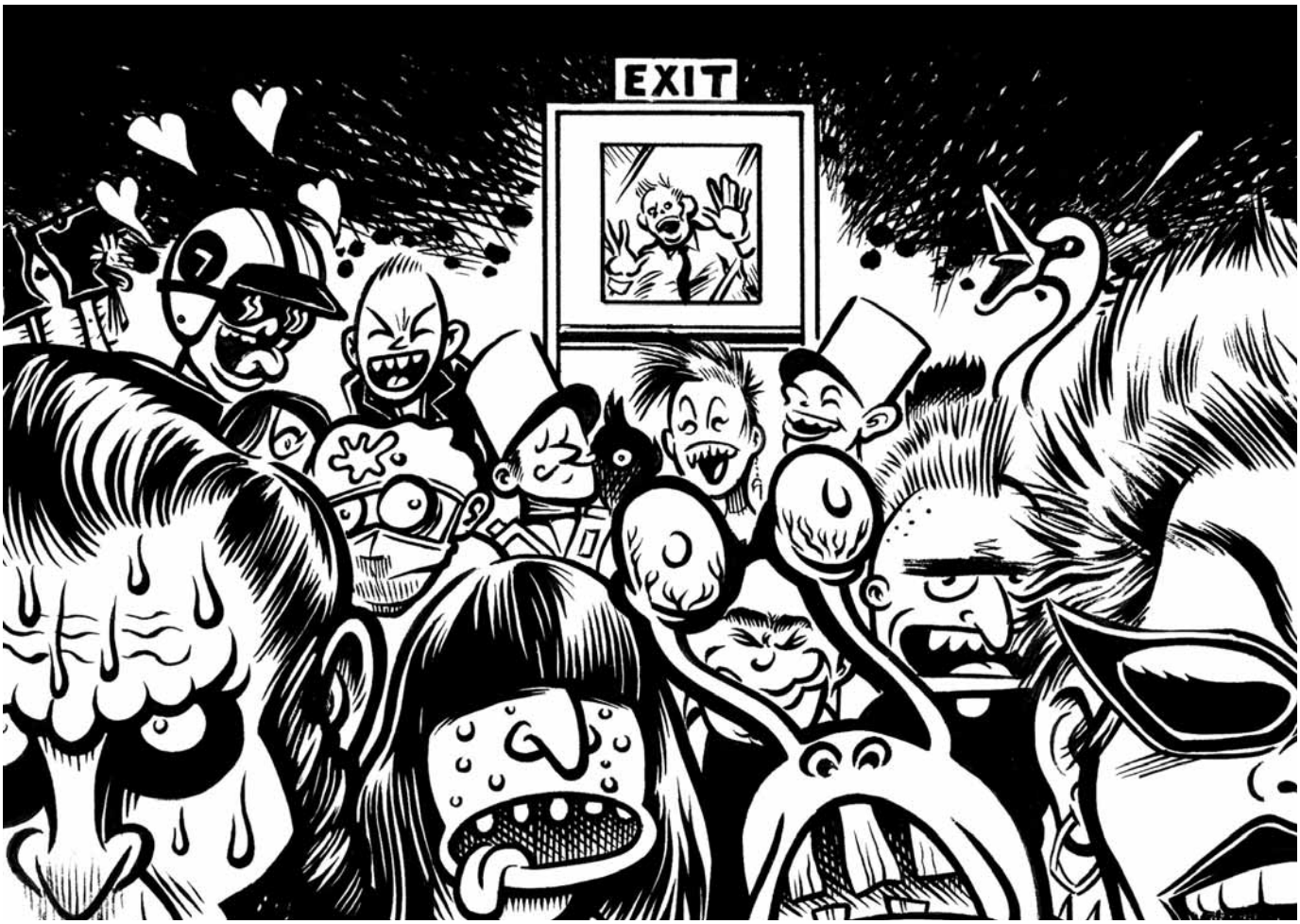
BEHIND THE (METAPHORICALLY) GREEN DOOR

"*There's an old piano and they play it hot, behind the green door / don't know what they're doing but they laugh a lot, behind the green door / wish they'd let me in so I could find out what's behind the green door.*"

–Jim Lowe, *"The Green Door," 1956*

I never went to any arena concerts or big festivals before I started going to punk shows. I never smoked a "doobie" or whatever the fuck with my pals after somebody's big sister dropped us off at the parking lot of the Foghat concert, and (somewhat fortunately) no budding genius had invented Warp©-a™-Palooza® yet. Ergo, I have absolutely no residual love for the Big Rock Show percolating around in my DNA whatsoever. I have never cared about big concerts in big venues in my life; I went directly from being a nerd sitting at home with his records and his comic books to being a nerd who timidly paid his buck-fifty to get into the punk show, then immediately made a beeline for the back of the room, hoping to lurk there undetected and unmolested until I could figure out what the hell was gonna happen and how the hell I was gonna be a part of it. Because, I mean, fuck, you don't really know what's gonna happen, right? Human sacrifice, improvised explosive devices, conscription into the French Foreign Legion—who knows what's on the agenda? You don't know what to expect or what's expected of you or how you should look or act—you just gotta kinda take it on faith that you belong there, and figure that you'll kinda work out the details on the fly, because, really, how fucked up can it be? Are there gonna be guys there running around with scalpels, trying to steal your kidneys? Race car drivers trying to mate with swans? Probably not. Pay your buck-fifty and stop being a pussy. *Don't be a douche, go see what's behind the green door* (there's an old song from 1956 by Jim Lowe called "The Green Door" [the Cramps covered it on their second album], about a guy who spends night after night trying and failing to get into a club [with a green door, natch], wondering what's going on in said club, and wishing he could participate. I know elitism is out in these heady, populistic times, but, all the same, it's always seemed to me that a central tenet of punk is getting yourself on the business side of the green door, or, failing that, just moving the fucking door to a location more suitable to your needs. Now take note as I boldly beat this metaphor to death). To be sure, there's also a certain amount of trepidation and uncertainty involved in attending one's first arena concert, likely revolving around the issue of whether or not some surly drunk is going to send you home with your jaw wired shut. Yet, *thousands* of people will be attending this event; the sheer volume of attendees suggests that nothing *too* unimaginable is likely to transpire, simply because of the institutional assets and infrastructure required to hold such an event in the first place. By comparison, a punk show is kind of the Wild Wild West, or at least appears that way. Now, all this said, I recently had occasion to go see Ace Frehley (you know, the "ack!" guy from *KISS Meets the Phantom of the Park*) at an all-day outdoor event in a local park. $7.50 to get in and all the fidget spinners and henna tattoos you can eat. And, while, I must admit that standing outside on a hot summer night watching a band of some sort—any sort, really—isn't a *terrible* use of one's free time, it didn't take long before I was clearly and repeatedly reminded of the various reasons why I remain so doggone *pleased* with myself at bypassing the Big Rock Show phase of my adolescence and skipping directly to punk shows. First off, *the sound. OH MY LORD, THE SOUND!!!* There must be some unwritten rule in the Soundman's Code requiring complete and utter unfamiliarity with the acoustic perceptions of the human ear as a precondition of employment. You can almost see the flowchart in their brains: *IS THE KICK DRUM TOO LOUD? If NO: Turn up kick drum. If YES: Turn up kick drum.* Then an arrow leading back to *IS THE KICK DRUM TOO LOUD?* Bands at these things sound like fifty-foot turds plummeting from a celestial outhouse and smashing into the roof of the barn from *Green Acres.* Further, cover bands in 2018 draw from the same threadbare repertoire as cover bands did in 1981, the year my band started playing out, except that now they utilize material from the eight or nine years of the '80s that didn't yet exist in 1981, which figures, since the end of the '80s (and the advent of grunge's killing frost) is when the local radio stations stopped updating their playlists. The remaining 20% of the performance that is not amplified thudding consists primarily of clichés: *HOW MANY TRUE BELIEVERS IN ROCK'N'ROLL DO WE HAVE IN THE AUDIENCE??? TRUE BELIEVERS IN ROCK'N'ROLL GET YOUR HANDS IN THE AIR!!! THIS SONG'S FOR ALL THE TRUE BELIEVERS IN ROCK'N'ROLL!!!* (cue cover of "Jukebox Hero" by Foreigner) *Christ, what a fucking evolutionary dead end*. Eventually, after suitable fol-de-rol and hardship of dingleberry, Ace comes out and unenthusiastically stumbles through his set. The highlight is his greeting the crowd with a slurred "ALL RIGHT, MICHIGAN!" quickly amended to "UH, WISCONSIN!" After Ace has stumbled off stage, stumbled back out in a Green Bay Packers shirt for his *de rigueur* encore (well, at least he got the shirt right), and stumbled back off again, I am finally free to return to my vehicle and bolt downtown to see a real band, the Toxenes. Praise be.

A few songs into the Toxenes set (a Minneapolis trio who top my very short list of don't-miss-'em live acts these days), a wedding party staggers past the club, resplendent in suits, ties, dresses, and other such emblems of their office. One bold straggler, attracted by the mysterious and sexy din of rock'n'roll, peels away from the group and positions himself in the doorway, his face pressed up against the glass of the exit door to the right of the stage. Balding at a relatively early age and still wearing his tie, he first gazes in at the stage, then over at the crowd, shuttling his eyes back and forth at regular intervals. At first, I am inclined to think he's simply a drunken reveler ogling the girls on a Saturday night (which, to be fair, would not be wholly indefensible here): Ariel, the bass player, is a textbook wacky rock chick with red-and-black hair and tattoos all over her arms, stomping around the stage in mangled fishnets and boots—Jenny Piccolo to Pebbles' Joanie Cunningham in some futuristic PG-13 live action remake of *The Pebbles and Bamm-Bamm Show*—whilst the guitar player, Monet, looks like a model gone rogue, but she's also bopping around the stage in fishnets and boots (he can't see the drummer from his hastily improvised vantage point, and can only infer her presence from the thumping and smashing). However, as I continue to observe him (as he, in turn, observes us), it seems apparent to me by the way his gaze keeps shifting between the band and the crowd that he isn't just eyeing up the fillies, he's *searching for answers*. He's trying to process what's going on on the other side of the window, to fit it into the logic of his framework of how the known universe operates. *He's searching for light in the darkness of insanity!* I mean, here are these wild looking girls, bashing out this crazy music, none of which sounds remotely like "Jukebox Hero" by Foreigner, and there's a room full of weird people in there enjoying themselves. Even in the gentleman's presumably dissipated state, one could see the wheels turning in his head:



ALEX BARRETT

Here are these wild looking girls, bashing out this crazy music, none of which sounds remotely like "Jukebox Hero" by Foreigner, and there's a room full of weird people in there enjoying themselves.

How does this work? Could I be one of those people enjoying myself in there? Do I just walk in? Do I need an appointment? What could I expect? What would be expected of me? Also, I'm drunk: Is the drummer wearing clothes? WHAT'S GOING ON IN THERE? The reveler stands transfixed at a portal (Yes! The *GREEN DOOR!* You get it!) which offers him an unexpected glimpse into a wholly alien pocket universe, trying to rectify it with the thudding and clichés that has presumably defined his prior experiences in this area (Okay, maybe I'm kinda reading a little bit into this dude's motivation here. Sometimes I like to kinda fill in the blanks a little bit, sue me). As his attention continues to flit between the band and the audience, it becomes apparent to me that he is now searching for The Disqualifier—that one bit of incontrovertible visual or auditory evidence that will allow him to dismiss the scenario he's currently observing as a ridiculous load of crap. He clearly can't come in in his suit and tie (or *can* he?), his party is getting farther and farther down the block, he knows he's gotta go (or *does* he?)— he now needs to find something that tells him *no, this isn't for you, this is not your scene*—something that reaffirms his life choices, relieves him from the obligation to figure out how to participate, and sends him on his way. A guy running around with a scalpel stealing kidneys, race car drivers trying to mate with swans—something along those lines would do nicely. But *he can't find it.* He can determine no true barrier to participation. HE is the one keeping himself on the non-business side of the (metaphorically) green door (THE DOOR TO THE CLUB IS NOT REALLY GREEN! HENCE THE METAPHOR! Okay!) via his own comfortable inaction; meanwhile, hip chicks in fishnets are blasting out songs like "Who Needs Boys, We Want Batteries" and everybody's having a gas. This is precisely the type of internal existential dilemma that, if left unchecked, can rot one's soul and psyche from the inside out. Luckily, the gawker is spared any deeper contemplation of his own epistemological shortcomings, as a member of his party swiftly doubles back, gives him a tug on the sleeve and a *"you coming or what?"* glance, and peels him, reluctantly, away from ye olde green door (memories of which, we can only assume, will subtly torment him for the remainder of his days on earth). Michigan's a cruel place, dude.

Love,
–Nørb

Travelers rest their horses, get a room, and get served a kick-ass meal.

Fourteen Deaths on the Days the Ramones Released Records

"Sex, death, and war. And justice.
There's no shortage of lyrics there."
–Ian Fraser "Lemmy" Kilmister

There's a biblical adage that said something along the lines of, *"From death comes new life."* Far be it for me to wax religious on y'all, as a lot of you know how I feel about organized religion, but, spiritually, that adage can ring true for someone like me who's a heavy duty music freak. That seventh day when a creator was supposedly resting? Nope. They spent that entire day gearing up for one of the greatest gifts from above, a musical genre that knocked the socks off humankind in the mid-1950s and beyond. That gift was rock'n'roll.

Keeping true to Saint Lemmy's adage above, using the actual studio LP release dates, below are fourteen examples from which new life was given unto this world from the Ramones the same exact day we lost someone from it.

1) April 23, 1976 / *Ramones* Self-titled debut: No stranger to the silver screen, actor James Flavin had parts in over four hundred films during his career, which started in 1932 (not to mention a grip of television appearances, including an episode of *The Twilight* Zone). During his forty years of acting, one of his highlights was portraying second mate Briggs in the original 1933 version of *King Kong*. Succumbing to heart complications, Flavin passed in Los Angeles (and his wife just a couple weeks later, sadly enough). Both were buried at Holy Cross Cemetery in Culver City, where my father and Darby Crash are laid to rest.

2) January 10, 1977 / *Leave Home*: Everyone reading this has had at least a hundred (or much, much more, like Sista Flo) chocolate chip cookies in their lifetime. Yeah, you've crammed many into your face, but do you know where they actually originate from? Enter your homegirl Ruth Wakefield, born June 17, 1903. A gnarly foodie before such a thing was even named, Ruth and her husband Ken opened a traveler's lodge located between Boston and New Bedford, aptly called The Toll House Inn, being it was the place where travelers stopped to pay a toll, rest their horses, get a room, and get served a kick-ass meal, all cooked and served by Ms. Ruth. Around 1938 is when the first chocolate chip cookie was made intentionally in her kitchen, using broken pieces of a semi-sweet Nestlé chocolate bar. The rest is oven-baked history. Ruth, the OG pimp of chocolate chip land, passed at the age of seventy-three in a Plymouth, Mass. hospital after suffering a long illness. Not that I use their brand of chocolate when I'm throwing down with my own scratch version of chocolate chip cookies, but Nestlé needs to print her history on their bags of chips, if they haven't already.

3) November 4, 1977 / *Rocket to Russia*: While not my usual type of reading, Tom Reamy was considered a heavyweight amongst his science fiction peers. He founded the first Texan sci-fi fan club in 1953 when he was eighteen, and quickly drummed up enough attention to host full-blown conventions a few years later. After some involvement with publishing *Trumpet* fanzine later on in the '60s, Reamy focused on becoming a published writer well into the '70s, when he met his untimely death at the age of forty-two, fittingly enough slumped over a typewriter, seven pages into a new story.

4) September 22, 1978 / *Road to Ruin*: Lina Carstens was born and died in Germany. She was a stage and film actress in her country well into her later years. Creepily enough, she was made a state actor by Joseph Goebbels, one of Adolph Hitler's closest associates and the Reich Minister of Propaganda of Nazi Germany at the time—the piece of shit Waylon Smithers who'd do anything for his precious leader. Being made a state actor was nothing more than an honorary title and had no monetary benefits. Under the Nazis, important stage actors were often used in major propaganda films. Real film stars, however, had no prospect of being awarded the title. Today a bit part, tomorrow the world. Feh.

5) February 4, 1980 / *End of the Century*: Dud Branom was born on November 30, 1897, in Sulphur Springs, Texas. Branom was twenty-nine years old when he broke into the big leagues on April 12, 1927 with the Philadelphia Athletics. He got traded a couple more times before bouncing back down into the minors, where he dicked around with half a dozen teams. He ended up being a cop in Oklahoma after his baseball career was just out to pasture.

6) July 20, 1981 / *Pleasant Dreams*: Lou Peters owned a Cadillac dealership in Lodi, Calif., and a group of "businessmen" began soliciting his place, wanting to buy it outright so's they could use it as a convenient means of laundering money. Peters decided to put his balls on the table and help the Feds try and nail these guys. His testimony ended up being a crucial part of the government's case and led to the conviction of Joseph Charles Bonnano, Sr. on perjury and conspiracy to obstruct a federal grand jury. This was the first felony conviction of the leader of the Bonanno organized crime family. Following Peter's death from cancer, the Society of Former Special Agents of the FBI began presenting an annual Louis E. Peters Memorial Award to private citizens who selflessly dedicate their time and service to assist the FBI in uncovering wrongdoing.

7) February 28, 1983 / *Subterranean Jungle*: Una Winifred Atwell was an accomplished Trinidadian pianist who enjoyed great popularity in Britain and Australia from the 1950s with a series of boogie-woogie and ragtime hits, selling over twenty million records after signing with Decca and earning up to 10K a week(!). She was the first black person to have a number one hit on the U.K. Singles Chart and is still the only female instrumentalist to do so. Keeping it real, Atwell continued playing the organ at her church. Not too long after her husband's passing and her house tragically burning to the ground from an electrical fire, Winifred died from a heart attack at the age of sixty-nine.

8) October 1, 1984 / *Too Tough to Die*: Walter "Smokey" Alston's name should ring a loud bell for any hardcore Dodgers fans, especially those who stayed with the team when they moved from Brooklyn to Los Angeles. Starting in the minors, and after a super short stint with the St. Louis Cardinals, Alston monkeyed around with the minors a bit more before becoming the Dodgers' manager from 1954 to 1976, where he spent twenty-two years helping the team earn four World Series titles. After enjoying a few years of retirement, Alston passed on due to complications of a heart attack at the age of seventy-two in his home state of Ohio.

SHANE MILNER

Around 1938 is when the first chocolate chip cookie was made intentionally in her kitchen, using broken pieces of a semi-sweet chocolate bar. The rest is oven-baked history.

9) May 19, 1986 / *Animal Boy*: Jimmy Lyons, the Jersey City, N.J.-born jazz alto sax player, had a long run with his part of the Cecil Taylor Unit. Starting out being very influenced by Charlie Parker, Lyons came into his own during his tenure with Taylor, where they recorded a sizeable catalog together. Lyons got taken down by lung cancer at the age of fifty-four, the same day Joey Ramone turned thirty-five years old.

10) September 15, 1987 / *Halfway to Sanity*: Steven Tuomi was twenty-four years old and had a job at a restaurant in Milwaukee, Wis. After finishing his shift on the evening of the 15th, he hit a few nightclubs in the area. At one of those clubs he met a guy named Jeff. They struck up a conversation and talked for a while. Jeff said he had a room reserved at the nearby Ambassador Hotel and asked if Steven wanted to spend the night. Steven agreed and off they went. Jeff, whose last name was Dahmer, slipped Steven a drink laced with a good amount of ground-up sleeping pills, and woke up the next morning alongside Steven's battered corpse, with the chest split open. Realizing the cleaning staff would likely notice the aftermath, Dahmer quickly bought a suitcase big enough to stuff Stiff Steven inside and drug it back to his grandmother's basement for some professional dismember and disposal time.

11) May 18, 1989 / *Brain Drain*: Dorothy Ruth was the biological daughter of Babe Ruth and his mistress Juanita Jennings. She was adopted by Babe and his first wife, Helen Ruth. Here's where it gets shady: it's been speculated that Helen didn't know Dorothy was the result of an extramarital affair between Babe and his side business Jennings. It's possible when Babe learned of his mistress's pregnancy, he convinced Helen—unaware that Babe was the father—to adopt the baby girl. Babe also somehow convinced Dorothy's biological mother to allow him to adopt their daughter, so that she could be raised with him and a possibly unsuspecting Helen. Some serious telenovela shit going on with that bunch, and Dorothy didn't learn until she was fifty-nine (eight years before she died) that the sancha Juanita was her biological mother.

12) September 1, 1992 / *Mondo Bizzaro*: Morris Carnovsky was a St. Louis-born U.S. citizen (1897). He was a stage and film actor in his twenties and soon became one of the founders of the esteemed NYC collective, Group Theatre. Word soon got around that he was once a member of the American Communist Party, and he got blacklisted. In 1953, he and his wife, who had also been blacklisted, appeared off-Broadway in *The World of Sholem Aleichem* as part of a cast of blacklisted actors who were assembled to demonstrate to the New York theater audience that they would not make them outcasts. It ran for two years. It took several more years to work steadily again as actors. Morris died due to natural causes, just a couple days shy of his ninety-fifth birthday.

13) December 1, 1993 / *Acid Eaters*: Native New Yorker Ray Gillen dipped his singing toe in quite a few projects, including the old punkish metal band F-66 that pressed a single in 1980. He had a tiny frontman replacement stint with Black Sabbath before getting Badlands together and signed, recording three albums in the process. Gillen did some work with Raging Slab before becoming another fatality of the AIDS epidemic in NYC. He was thirty-four.

14) July 18, 1995 / *¡Adios Amigos!:* During the fifteenth stage of the 1995 Tour de France, Fabio Casartelli and a few other riders crashed on the descent of the Col de Portet d'Aspet in the Pyrenees. Casartelli's head struck the concrete blocks along the roadway, causing severe head injuries and loss of consciousness. Doctors arrived within ten seconds, and while being flown to a local hospital by helicopter, Casartelli stopped breathing. He was declared dead after numerous resuscitation attempts. Fabio was only twenty-four years old.

–Designated Dale
designateddale@yahoo.com

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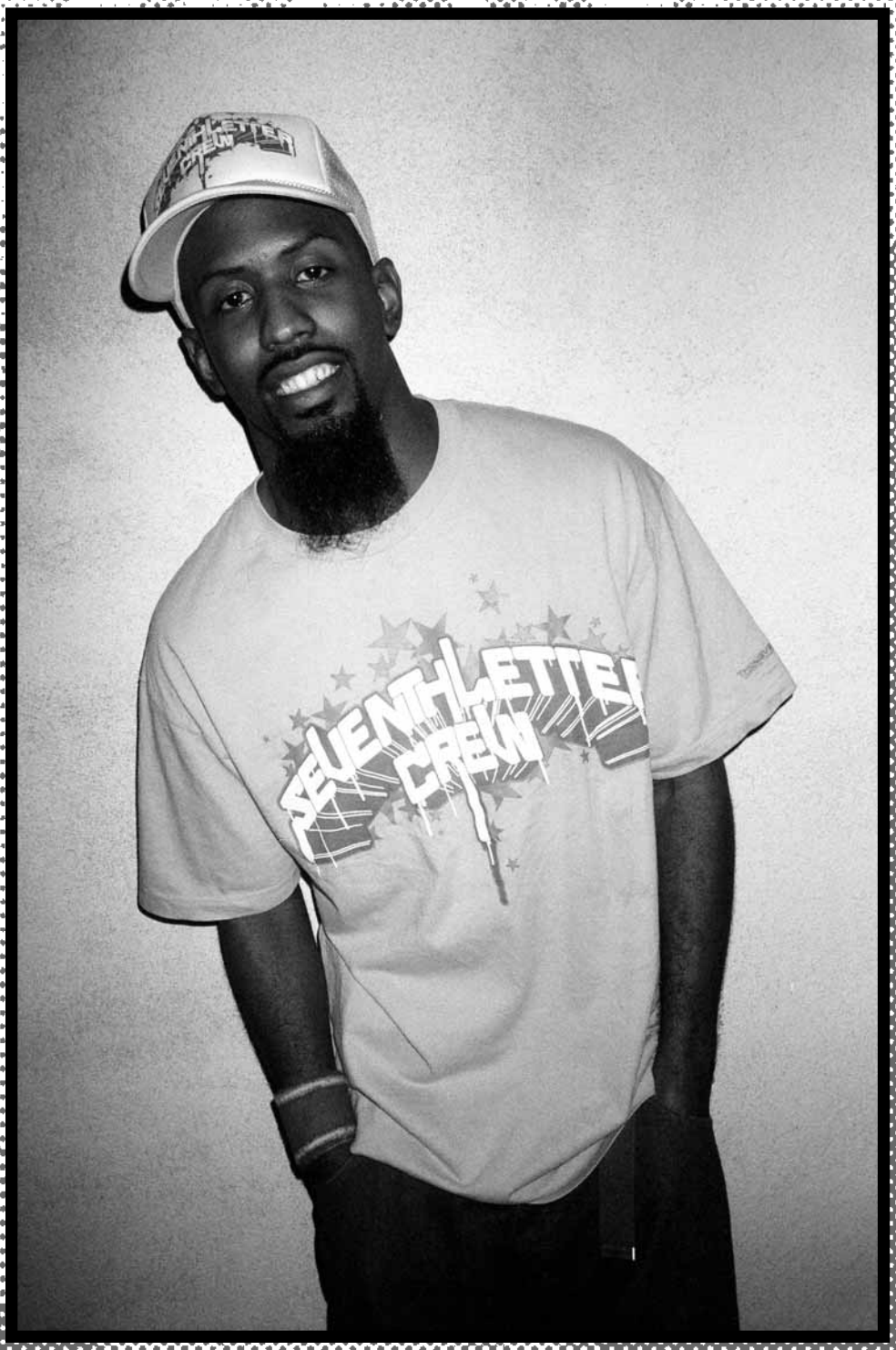

Dan Monick's Photo Page

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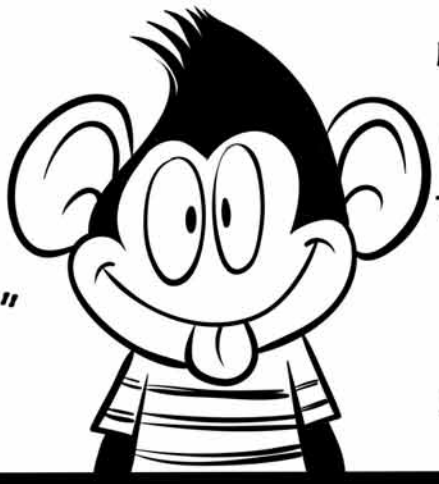

YES, I CONFESS. I HAVE A NEW LOVE THAT I HAVE TO SHARE! I LOVE SUMO! I'VE BEEN WATCHING HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE TOURNAMENTS SINCE JANUARY, AND I'M A TOTAL FAN NOW! WHEN IT'S TOURNAMENT TIME, I RUSH HOME AND TURN ON NHK JAPAN SO I WONT MISS A THING! I'VE LIKED SUMO FOR A LONG TIME, BUT NOW, THANKS TO NHK, I CAN FOLLOW ALL THE TOURNAMENTS!

MY FAVORITE WRESTLER IS TOCHINOSHIN TSUYOSHI. HE'S ORIGINALLY FROM MTSKHETA, GEORGIA AND IS A RISING STAR IN THE TOP DIVISION OF SUMO! HE IS A STRONG AND TOUGH WRESTLER!

IN THE MOST RECENT TOURNEY, HE GAINED THE RANK OF "OZEKI"(2ND HIGHEST RANK IN SUMO) BY GOING 13-2.

MY PLAN IS TO VISIT JAPAN IN THE COMING YEAR AND WATCH A SUMO TOURNAMENT IN PERSON! HAKKEYOI!!!

PURO PINCHE POETRY Y CUENTOS

EDITED BY EVER VELASQUEZ AND EUGENIA NICOLE

Instead they call you a natural disaster.

Tremors

To be a survivor is to be an earthquake.

Ergo there will be aftershocks.
Ergo there will be small tremors.
Ergo you are fault lines. You are fault. You are blame. You are lines. You are borders. You are multiple boundaries. You are cones and roped-off areas.
Ergo there are plates, hard embedded places shifting inside at all times, even when you're not aware, they are slowly chipping away at something that at any moment, for no apparent reason, will quake.

You wish you could warn people about you,
but the science isn't exact,
even in the 21st century you can't really prepare for an earthquake.

You wish you could tell them about the death and destruction to come,
about the streets that will split open, the wires that will come down, the cars that will crash, the bridges that will fall, the tsunamis which lead to floods which sets off falling rocks, the houses slide, the people drown, there is screaming, maybe underneath all your cracked earth is a volcano, let it erupt, let it spill out of you, consuming all in its path, taking down all in its way, keeping all away, please, please stay away.
You don't know what I'm capable of.

There's nothing for you here,
the trees are gone, the sky is a dark grey,
She is ashes on your shirt, ashes on your hair, She's only satisfied when there's blood, She will eat you, She would eat herself if She didn't need Her ecosystem so much.
She is hot. She is molten. She is don't touch, shh shh shh. It will all be over soon.

Then there will be nothing but quiet. Soon.
There will be nothing but smoke.
It will hypnotize her, maybe She can see through it, but it's so thick, it's so big, She can barely see through it. How did it come to this, She can't really tell you.

It was only a tremor. It was only a shake.
Not supposed to be a real earthquake.

Haven't had one of her in awhile, shouldn't be due for one anytime soon.
She will not be able to explain herself, her nature.
So many people want to know why She's so hard to predict.
Why after years of study, years of research, scores of experts, professionals, no one can really nail Her down, no one can nail you down.

No matter how hard they will try to prepare the truth is,
anything can happen,
you are no guarantee.

Instead they call you a
natural
disaster.

Who would have thought that the earth itself is an oxymoron,
looking like one thing but really being something else.
You wish you could tell them how you have prayed to be something else.
Something sweet, you wish you could melt onto the tongue.

You have a reoccurring dream where you are silent
all your layers have settled into themselves, there's always a little movement
but above no one and nothing can feel you.
Above you is the desert they walk through,
there is a sunset, they take a photograph or a breath,
they long to be surrounded by you, held by you, witnessed by you.
They call you
beautiful,
they name you
a perfect day.
Your skies are every color,
there is so much of you, your beauty extends for miles upon miles,
there is nothing blocking the view
of you.

Above
you are the horizon,
when darkness falls
it is a cool blanket they welcome all around them.

You want them to know that even earthquakes dare to dream.

Make no mistake, though.
You are whole because sometimes you are split.
A little crooked.
You can leave dust on the skin, a little dirt in the eye.
Car alarms will go off suddenly, you have the power to startle.

But there are people who won't mind that,
they will liken this to the state of the desert,
the ground beneath them they will call *sacred*.
Scientists will simply refer to you as a type of enigma.
To be honest, it kind of fits.

I am a survivor
Ergo
I am an earthquake.
Ergo
I am so much more complex than you realize.

–Meliza Bañales, aka Missy Fuego

Meliza Bañales, aka Missy Fuego, is an award-winning author, performer, filmmaker, educator, and cultural critic. Originally from Los Angeles, she was a fixture in the spoken-word and slam communities in the San Francisco Bay Area from 1996-2010 and is the author of three books: Say It With Your Whole Mouth: Poems *(Monkey Press, 2003),* 51 Poems About Nothing At All: Chapbook, Poems *(Ladybox Books, 2016), and a novel* Life Is Wonderful, People Are Terrific *(Ladybox Books, 2015) which was a 2016 Lambda Literary Finalist. She is a professor of Literature & Cultural Studies at UC San Diego and lives in L.A. and San Diego. missyfuego.com. IG @missyfuego*

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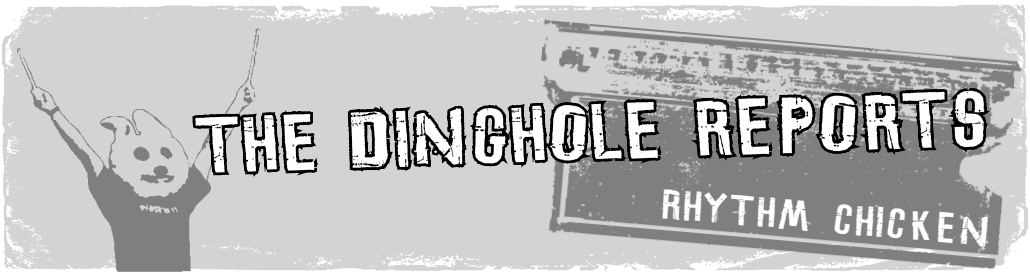


Soup shop hot pads and oven mitts! Punk!

The Seemingly Simple Topic of Punk Rock T-Shirts

So I have a new neighbor, Jon. I've known Jon ever since the Rhythm Chicken played outside the 7th Street Entry in Minneapolis after his band was playing inside, about eighteen years ago. Jon is easily one of the three best drummers in Wisconsin, and he just moved from the exciting Milwaukee area to the smallest weird little village of Ephraim so he and his wife could open a shop selling odd records and books. I'm not exactly sure how this unlikely scenario unfolded, but I'm not complaining one bit. Our little parking lot now has one joke drummer and one seriously great drummer.

A few days ago, I was sitting behind my soup counter racking my brain for a topic for this very column. Jon walked in for lunch and we started talking about how the day's business was going. He mentioned how odd it was that a customer came into his shop wearing a T-shirt from the band Slint. In this very rural area, the sighting of a punk rock T-shirt of any kind is somewhat notable. This got us talking about the seemingly simple topic of punk rock T-shirts, which is actually more complex than you'd think.

I know many of you readers live in a large city where the sighting of a punk rock T-shirt on a stranger is no big deal. "Oh look, that person's wearing a Dead Kennedys shirt. Big whoop." It's funny, when I venture to Chicago or Los Angeles and see some random person on the street wearing a Marked Men shirt, I instantly feel a bond and want to start talking with them about how cool the Marked Men are. If I actually do start up such a conversation, I usually get that awkward look that says "Do I know you?"

I'll never forget when I saw a stranger on the street in Krakow, Poland who was wearing a Naked Raygun shirt. I got all excited and approached him because of his shirt. After awkwardly realizing that the fellow didn't speak English, Polish, or German, I pointed to his shirt and gave him the thumbs-up sign. He seemed annoyed.

Okay, back to my new neighbor Jon. We discussed the purposes of the punk rock T-shirt, of which there are many. From the band's point of view, it can be a marketing tool, a visual form of expression, or a way to get enough gas money to get you to the next gig. It's funny how it has become an assumption that if you're a punk rock band, you must have T-shirts bearing your name. Then you have a band like Fugazi who never made T-shirts. What happened? Some die-hard fan made shirts screen printed with *This Is Not a Fugazi T-shirt!* on the front.

This brings us to the purpose of the punk rock T-shirt from the point of view of the person wearing it. Let's be serious. I know that me wearing a Loudmouths T-shirt is not going to make any random person go search out this defunct band and buy their album. Some old lady who walks into my soup shop and sees me wearing a New Bomb Turks shirt is not going to get hip to their music and go to their next local appearance. Why do I wear these shirts? Well, first of all, to me they just look cool. I probably feel cooler just for wearing such a cool shirt, but there's more to it than that.

Jon made the rather correct statement that the punk rock T-shirt is more of a communication tool. It says to the world that you like this band, you approve of this band, and if anyone out there also knows and likes this band, then we are like-minded and we might have much to talk about. I think he really nailed it on the head. About five years ago I had a Chicago customer walk into my shop wearing a Drive Like Jehu shirt. I was rather taken aback and told the guy that I was pretty sure he was wearing the only Drive Like Jehu shirt in the county. We got to talking music and now he and I communicate regularly on social media.

A few years back another person walked in wearing a Killdozer shirt. I got all excited and we started talking about our favorite albums and songs. Then there was an odd experience last month. A young girl walked in wearing an SST Records T-shirt. I commented on how she didn't seem old enough to be alive during SST's heyday. As it turns out, she got it at a thrift store and knew nothing of the famous old punk record label. Ha! The punk rock T-shirt sent a message without the owner's knowledge.

Then there is the odd topic of a band member wearing the shirt of his or her own band. Over the years, the Rhythm Chicken has had three different T-shirts printed up. I currently own none of these shirts, nor have I ever worn them. It just seems lame to wear the shirt of your own band. I think it might be okay to wear the shirt of your *old* band, but only after the band has been broken up for ten or so years. Even odder is the T-shirt of the band that *never* existed. One of my employees used to wear a shirt with heavy metal lettering spelling out the non-existent band Ditch Weed. That kinda ruled.

This brings us to the topic of non-punk rock T-shirts. I am currently betraying my previous policy on soup shop T-shirts. I used to think that selling shirts for your business was rather uncool. Now that I've reached the seven-year anniversary of my soup business, I'm caving in to capitalism. My soup shop shirts are designed by Rev. Nørb and screen printed by the punk fellows at San Pedro's Cali-Mucho Printing. Technically, they are not punk rock T-shirts, but they're pretty damn close! I'm still not feeling all too confident in my decision to make shirts, but at least they will be on sale right next to my soup shop hot pads and oven mitts! Punk rock!

I pointed to his shirt and gave him the thumbs-up sign. He seemed annoyed.

STEVE THUESON

Dinghole Report #165: Eighteen Year Old Ruckus!

(Rhythm Chicken sighting #....25? 30? It was a long time ago.)

It was a packed club at the 7th Street Entry in downtown Minneapolis. The bands that night were Burning Airlines, the Promise Ring, and Pele. Just as Burning Airlines finished their last song and people started pouring out onto the sidewalk of 7th Street, a certain chicken started bashing away on his drumset just outside the exit. A crowd gathered around to witness the lunacy and cheer on the ruckus. Matt, the bassist from Pele, ran inside and told the bands to check out the sidewalk performer who was stealing the show. Various band members ran out to witness the ruckus, yell along, and take pictures. I don't remember much else about that gig. At least the cops never showed up.

Years later, I ran into Peter Moffet, the drummer from Burning Airlines. We were both backstage at a Bon Jovi concert in Las Vegas—unlikely but true. He told me he still shares that Rhythm Chicken story with people these many years later. Dan, the drummer from the Promise Ring, has been to my soup shop a few times and has become a friend. Jon, the drummer from Pele is now my neighbor and we talk regularly about such riveting topics as punk rock T-shirts and eighteen-year-old Chicken gigs.

–Rhythm Chicken

I am unable to decline something that Kim Deal asks me to do...

Nardwuar The Human Serviette vs. Steve Albini

Nardwuar: Who are you?
Steve: My name is Steve Albini.
Nardwuar: Right off the bat, Steve Albini, I want to ask you about the importance of this band right here, The Mentally Ill. [Nardwuar hands Steve a Mentally Ill 45.]
Steve: The Mentally Ill were a unique and perverse punk band in Chicago. Well, actually, Deerfield, which is a suburb north of Chicago. They were a group of friends who played music and made one fantastic single, and then later some other recordings. They played no live concerts during their initial incarnation and then many years later they reformed and played a concert or two.
Nardwuar: Amazing guitar sound, isn't it?
Steve: Brutal. One of the ugliest sounds ever on record, yes. This record is a pivotal record in the sound of punk rock, in my opinion.
Nardwuar: I have a gift for you. I'm not sure if you already have this gift, but I'm giving it to you. *Kurt Cobain's Journals*. Are you aware of his journals, Steve? [Nardwuar hands a copy of a *Kurt Cobain's Journals* to Steve.]
Steve: I think I was aware that this happened, but I haven't looked through them. I don't know them.
Nardwuar: It's your own copy, for you.
Steve: Well, thank you. [Steve turns to a page in the journal.]
Nardwuar: Kurt loved Big Black.
Steve: This [looking at list in Kurt's journals] is a Big Black song called "Crack Up," which only appeared on a compilation album, a Touch And Go compilation called *God's Favorite Dog*. That's a deep cut, as they would say. Some people would say. I wouldn't normally say that, but I feel like it's kind of appropriate here.
Nardwuar: It's in Kurt's journals, for you.
Steve: Oh, well thank you.
Nardwuar: Was it fun recording Nirvana? Did you really light farts on fire?
Steve: There was some fart lighting, but the band also got into this thing where they would spill alcohol on things and set it on fire. One of the things they spilled alcohol on was Dave Grohl, so there are some Polaroids of Dave Grohl with his ass on fire, things like that.
Nardwuar: You also loved pranking people. Gene Simmons, did you phone Gene Simmons?
Steve: Gene Simmons actually phoned the studio looking to speak to the band. He had been given that number by management or the record label or something. And he called the studio and Kurt didn't want to talk to him. He handed me the phone and said, "You can deal with him." So, I pretended to be Kurt for a while, talking to Gene Simmons. They had a thing set up there—you could record the telephone calls—so we recorded the conversation with Gene Simmons where he admitted, basically, he wasn't familiar with Nirvana's music or any of the bands that Kurt was friends with.
Nardwuar: So, Gene thought he was talking to…?
Steve: He thought he was talking to Kurt Cobain, but he was talking to me.
Nardwuar: Yes, because one time I interviewed Gene Simmons and he said, "Oh, I talked to Kurt Cobain."
Steve: Yes, sorry to break the spell there, Gene.
Nardwuar: Steve Albini, what is the importance of *Roctober* Fanzine? [Nardwuar hands Steve a *Roctober* fanzine.]
Steve: [Laughs] *Roctober* is a terrific fanzine done by true enthusiasts in the Chicago area. They do a fantastic job of dredging up niche and perverse musical acts of all description. Bands with animals in them, bands that wear costumes, bands that perform with puppets, bands with inanimate members, stuff like that. I'm a big fan of *Roctober*, and I strongly support the endeavor.
Nardwuar: I have another gift for you and I'm not sure exactly, Steve, if you have it, Pansy Division's *Manada.* [Nardwuar hands a Pansy Division 45 to Steve.]
Steve: [Laughs]
Nardwuar: What do you remember about *Manada* and do you collect all the records you have made?
Steve: I don't, actually—and I don't have a copy of this record. Pansy Division, fantastic punk band, and I remember specifically the song "Hockey Hair," about having a fling or developing a relationship with someone you're embarrassed to go out with because he has hockey hair. I thought, yes, truly terrific band.
Nardwuar: Millions Of Dead…?
Steve: …Cops.
Nardwuar: Cops. You weren't too much a fan of that band.
Steve: No, they were awful.
Nardwuar: Worse than Asshat?
Steve: I admire the name Asshat, tremendously. I especially admire their logo. I don't know if you're familiar with the Asshat logo, but it's a magnificent drawing of a bowler hat that also looks like an ass, with a feather plume coming out of it, that also looks like a fart plume. Absolutely magnificent logo, I'm unfamiliar with Asshat's music.
Nardwuar: But you don't like MDC too much?
Steve: Only because they're bad.
Nardwuar: But they're still in the game. They're still in the game. You've got to give them that, right?
Steve: Okay.
Nardwuar: Why didn't you like MDC? I'm just curious.
Steve: They were stupid and bad.
Nardwuar: Who was good? What is the opposite of stupid and bad?
Steve: Do you want me to name a band that I like?
Nardwuar: What's the opposite of MDC?
Steve: I've never really thought about it in those terms, but… do you want me to name a contemporary band of MDC who were great? A band like The Ex would be a really great counterexample.
Nardwuar: "I'm a Prick."
Steve: Okay.
Nardwuar: "Lemmings." "TV Waltz." Just…
Steve: I believe you have just named some songs by the first band I was ever in, a band called Just Ducky.
Nardwuar: Yes. Do you remember those songs at all? What was that era like?
Steve: Until you just refreshed my memory, no, I wouldn't have been able to recall those song titles. We were teenagers. We were learning how to play instruments and learning how to be in a band.
Nardwuar: In that era, *Free Range* zine said you were duct taped to a chair?
Steve: Ah. Something about that sounds familiar, but I don't remember.
Nardwuar: For a review?
Steve: I don't—oh, I know what happened. Oh, what you're describing is a stunt for *Forced Exposure* fanzine where I was duct taped to a chair and blindfolded, and then Byron Coley, who was one of the

PHOTO COURTESY OF NARDWUAR

... I'm putty in her hands.

editors of the fanzine, played records for me and I was asked to review them while blindfolded and taped to a chair.

Nardwuar: Did you keep a pet cockroach?

Steve: No, although there was a large dead cockroach in a Ziploc bag who was named Archie, in an apartment that I lived in in Chicago.

Nardwuar: Who wears guitar straps like you?

Steve: Who else wears a guitar strap around their waist? Santiago Durango, the other guitar player in Big Black, adopted the proper guitar strap technique.

Nardwuar: Proper?

Steve: Yes. I seem to recall the Australian band The Mark Of Cain; I think their bass player adopted the proper method of guitar strap wearing.

Nardwuar: What is the correct way to wear a guitar?

Steve: [Miming, with an extra long guitar strap] Okay, so, if this is my guitar. I would attach one end of the guitar strap here, to this end of the guitar [the bottom] and wrap it around my waist here, and then again around my waist, then attach it to the horn or rim of the guitar. If the strap button is on the back, it isn't stable. And then the guitar would stay in that position no matter where I turned. The guitar would stay in that position.

Nardwuar: I'm not worthy, I'm not worthy!

Steve: Are you doing the Wayne and Garth quote from *Wayne's World*?

Nardwuar: And, of course, I'm not worthy, meaning Métal Urbain!

Steve: Ah, okay, Métal Urbain are a truly inspirational early punk band.

Nardwuar: You love them, don't you? I think you said, "I'm not worthy."

Steve: I would have, yes. I've met Éric Débris from Métal Urbain, but I've never worked with the band proper. Their early records were real game changers. They bridged the gap between the pure noise electronic element of experimental music and the driving, aggressive punk rock music of the time. At the time, it was a unique synthesis.

Nardwuar: What about Jim's twenty-four-hour Polish sausage?

Steve: Jim's is a South Side institution in Chicago. It's an all-night sandwich and hotdog stand, and they sell magnificent Polish sausage.

Nardwuar: What about Jarritos sodas? [pronouncing it "Jarr-itos"]

Steve: I believe it's pronounced "haritos," and they're very colorful, nondescript fruit-ish flavored soda pops sold in Mexican groceries in Chicago. They add a little spark of gaiety to the kitchen.

Nardwuar: Steve Albini, what about "fluffy coffee"?

Steve: Fluffy coffee is a kind of latte drink we make at the studio where I work (Electric Audio). As our resident coffee expert, Taylor Hales, calls it, it's a very dry latte, meaning it's a lot of milk and not a lot of coffee. The milk is mixed with maple syrup before it's foamed, so you end up with some delicious maple syrup foam, sort of like a marshmallow, on the top of your coffee drink. And the coffee is mixed with cinnamon, so you have slightly—there's a whiff of exotica about the coffee flavor—that's all.

Nardwuar: Here you are with me, at South By Southwest!

Steve: Everything you are saying is true.

Nardwuar: Which you kind of said you wouldn't go to?

Steve: Yes. The reason I'm here is because Kim Deal was going to be here, and she needed/wanted someone to act as her interviewer in a setting where she would be telling her story to people about where she was in life, what's up with her new record, that sort of thing. She asked me to do it and I am constitutionally unable to decline something that Kim Deal asks me to do. I'm putty in her hands.

Nardwuar: Thank you very much, Steve Albini. Why should people care about Steve Albini?

Steve: I'm doing my best. I don't have any particular sales pitch for myself. I'm just trying to earn an honest living and doing what I can to uphold my end of the culture.

Nardwuar: Well, thank you very much, Steve Albini. Keep on rocking in the free world, and doot doola doot doo…

Minimize it all! Watch out! Here I come!

Deep Breath for Things You Can't Control

The divinity school was closed for the summer, but someone was still playing the organ. It kept distracting the well-dressed man who was facilitating our training session. I'd been surprised when I was selected to be one of twenty-three people in our provincial branch to participate in five days of education aimed at streamlining our internal processes and reducing waste. I've long assumed that everyone I work with suspects that I secretly have a terrible attitude about, oh, everything. I'll admit I have a hard time faking enthusiasm for anything that requires being a joiner. However, when this training opportunity came up and I applied for it, I found myself uncharacteristically optimistic. And then one Friday, an email came in congratulating me for making it into the course. My husband, who was then forced to plan for five days of full-time, solo parenting of our two young boys, was far more supportive than I would have been if our roles were reversed. This is how I found myself in an abandoned urban divinity school in the middle of spring in Toronto, learning how to map processes and analyze statistics while an unidentified organ enthusiast played endlessly in an adjacent room. People in our group who'd grown up religious said it reminded them of church. I was raised by atheists and immediately thought of a generic spooky scene from a *Scooby-Doo* episode instead.

Turns out I was fairly well-suited to learn how to minimize waste and repetition. Since I had two kids and my life got flipped upside down, I have been on a quest to simplify everything I can. For example, when I packed for my trip to Toronto I brought five black dresses. One for each day of my training. Why make more complicated decisions about what to wear when each morning could start with something as simple as "Should I wear the one with sleeves or no sleeves?" Ladies get a raw deal in so many areas of life, but being able to wear one garment instead of two and still seem appropriately dressed is a real score as far as I'm concerned. Parenting increases the number of things you need to do in a day and decreases the time you have to do anything fun, which, for a lot of people, is a frustrating catalyst that shoves you into attempts at simplification.

Show me an article about how to survive with a smaller wardrobe, how to organize your grocery list to minimize erroneous purchases, how to keep your house tidier by having less stuff and I am all over it. I cannot get enough of that shit. It's become a strange obsession. I think constantly about minimizing things. Minimizing stuff, sure, but also minimizing the amount of time I spend cooking each night and minimizing the frustration that comes with getting kids' bags packed for weekend activities. Minimize it all! Watch out! Here I come!

Of course, I read the immensely popular and incredibly bonkers Marie Kondo book *The Life Changing Magic of Tidying Up*. I really appreciated her disdain for organizational props and services. Instead, Kondo says, we should just have less stuff. I see this when I look at my husband's bathroom shelf. He doesn't need to organize anything or buy any particular jars or boxes because you don't need that shit when all you have is soap, shampoo, and a razor.

I started doing an adapted version of Kondo's method, which essentially involves evaluating each possession you have and determining whether it "sparks joy." Which is fine if you're holding a Sonic Youth T-shirt from 1990 (Joy!), but kind of falls apart when you have to assess the absorbent underpants you wear when you get your period (uh… joy?). I can't get rid of those underpants because then all my joy-inducing high-waist jeans would get wrecked, but I can't say they bring me actual joy.

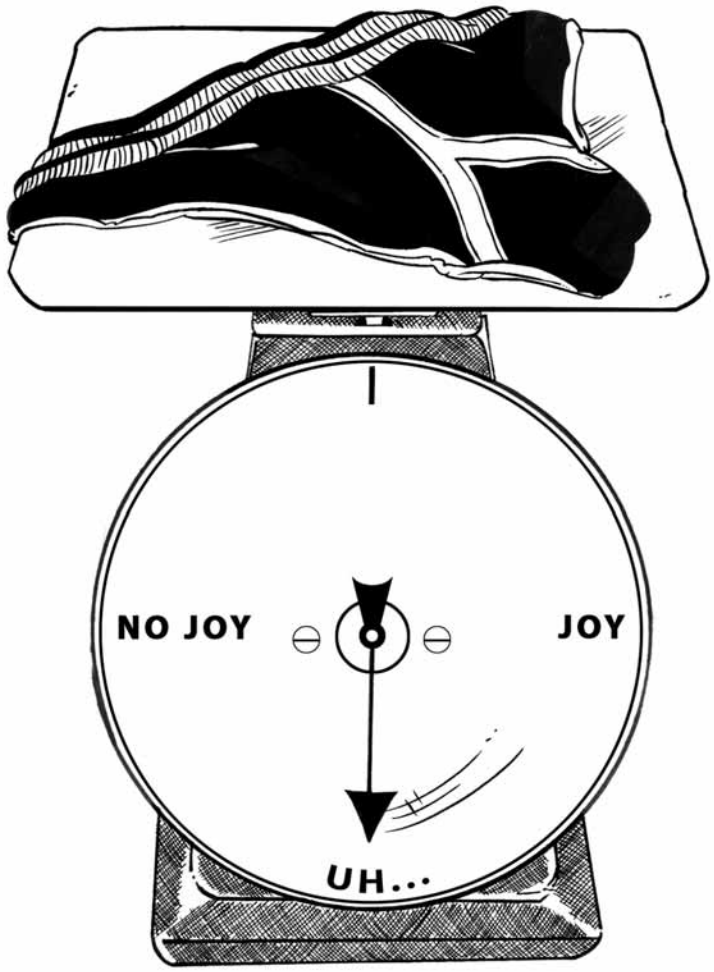
Our training facilitator was an admirably organized middle-aged guy named Dale. He had been teaching these methods for decades and had spent many years working to organize and improve everything from car manufacturing plants to hospitals. He was now focusing on organizations like the one I work for, government branches providing social services to the public. At one point he got a faraway look in his eye when he discussed what it was like to put new processes in place in a manufacturing plant. "It's like shooting fish in a barrel," he said. "It's so easy compared to this because there are no people acting unpredictably. It's just knobs and buttons. Once you get people involved, it makes everything more complicated."

Marie Kondo has a particular lesson in her book that took me a while to take to heart. She is very clear about the fact that you cannot force her tidying methods on other people. You can only change what you control. You don't control other people's stuff. Don't try to organize or minimize other people's things, she warns. It will just make them angry with you.

I follow lots of minimalist families on social media and I often marvel at how they're able to unite in the goals to live with less. Kids, at least most kids, love stuff. My own children have an intense need to possess things whether it's a cool stick we found in the park or a Playmobil fire truck they saw in a catalog. I remember that ache myself from childhood. I don't know why it became such a strong feeling for me, since my parents rarely bought us random stuff. We traveled and moved a lot, so it was never in anyone's best interests to have piles of crap to haul around. But still I wanted things. All the time.

I try to avoid these kinds of stressful situations with my own kids. My first choice is to just not take them shopping with me, ever. Failing that, I give them firm warnings that we are ONLY BUYING SHOES or sticking religiously to what's written on our grocery list. Library books satisfy the urge to acquire but then always need to be taken back. Still, the stuff creeps in. My husband, though a true minimalist when it comes to his own possessions, really loves shopping for the kids' birthday and Christmas gifts. We have two sets of grandparents living in the same city as us, and that is incredible. It also means, however, that they often arrive with stuff. The kids love it. It brings them joy. They are privileged to even be in this situation. Our family has more than enough money to live off of, which I know makes my efforts at minimalism a privilege, where for so many others, not having stuff is a consequence of being poor.

I've tried to reduce the things my kids have, so they can focus on the stuff that really matters to them and, to be perfectly honest, so there is less crap for me to clean up in the living room. I'm sometimes successful when they outgrow things or completely forget about certain toys. Sometimes my older son talks about things he'd like to get rid of and we do it together. They're generally pretty happy when they know that the things we're giving away are



STEVE LARDER

Ladies get a raw deal in so many areas of life, but being able to wear one garment instead of two and still seem appropriately dressed is a real score as far as I'm concerned.

going to other people who need them. But I also run into situations that don't go as well. I sold off their box of plastic Peppa Pig figurines because they hadn't played with them in months, only to have them ask for them one year later, and look emotionally wounded when I told them what I'd done. Marie Kondo is right. You can't make other people come on board if they don't want to. And if you force reduction of stuff on them, don't expect them to be happy about it.

I came home from each day of training feeling mentally exhausted but excited about everything I was learning. I walked into my hotel room each night and marveled at the novelty of an environment that gets cleaner and quieter as the day goes on, instead of the opposite. I called my husband and he recounted tales of finding a full bowl of ketchup on the living room floor, along with multiple, mismatched, soaking wet socks on the stairs. I was taking a vacation from chaos temporarily, but I knew I'd be back in the middle of it soon enough. I also knew better than to assume I could fully implement changes in my house, because I know that I'm not the only family member who gets a say in these things. Sure, I can use the organizational techniques I learned to make sure we never run out of laundry detergent, but bulldozing in with an entirely new bedtime routine is unlikely to be appreciated by the people I share my home with.

Perhaps the attraction of paring down, organizing, and streamlining is that the job will never be done. Parenting is messy. You can't really minimize or smooth it out because it's pure chaos most of the time. It's a social service organization, not a car assembly plant. It's a house full of abandoned bowls of ketchup, not a quiet, clean hotel room. As much as I fantasize about living in a small, quiet, perfectly organized house by myself, I couldn't actually ever bring myself to live outside of the imperfect world populated by the people I love. And all their fucking stuff.

–Jennifer Whiteford

Chris Boarts Larson Photo Column - Holy Mountain

Chris Boarts Larson, www.slugandlettuce.net | fb.me/slugandlettuce

Holy Mountain, basement show, March 26, 2006 RVA

Getting to see a rad local basement show at the height of an obsession is perfection. My Holy Mountain obsession was in full swing at this show, right around the time of my twenty-year anniversary issue of Slug & Lettuce. It was also probably my last total cut loose show before I found out I was pregnant! This show was so fun! This band was so rad and I love this memory capsule of time.

Their *Entrails* LP continues to be one of my all-time favorites. It hits me like quickly downshifting, driving off a cliff, and smashing your fist into a brick wall. Their driving energy, weaving melody, epic guitars, low gear throttle, raging d-beats, and blistering, driving forcefield makes me feel absolutely energized and crazed at the time same. I love this record and this band.

–Chris Boarts Larson

If you want to hear *Entrails*, check out:
noidearecords.bandcamp.com/album/entrails

Tony Kinman, RIP

Gone Is The Punk Roamer

On May 4, Tony Kinman, punk incarnate who welded together half of the Dils, died at age sixty-three from a potent form of cancer, after having just worked on the new album by Ford Madox Ford, a band helmed by his sibling Chip. My heart and punk prayers go out to the Kinman family during this difficult time. The interview I conducted with Tony for *Left of the Dial*, my fledgling magazine, left a huge impression on readers, including Ian MacKaye, who sent me a personal postcard about it. I reprinted it in my book of the same name, and it will always be a cornerstone of my "career." I discovered that Tony was unrepentant, earnest, and a rock'n'roll intellectual who harnessed endless memories, waxed poetic and realistic, and understood the full terrain of modern music like few others.

In that interview, he told me, without restraint, "…On one of my favorite albums of all the times, the first Ramones' album, the music… is very simple, but to me it's an artistic simplicity…That record was cut in the contemporary world of *The Six Wives of Henry VIII* by Rick Wakeman. It was cut in the world of Steely Dan, cut in the world of Jethro Tull, in the world of pop music getting ever and ever more complex, and that album was a brilliant intellectual reaction to that." To Tony and myself, the Ramones were not delinquents from Queens mouthing renegade hooligan lyrics about glue, loudmouths, and beating on brats; they were serious artists who helped steer a defiant, back-to-basics course in musical history.

At this pivot in the relationship of their brotherhood, this epic loss, I know the Kinmans' music will remain seminal. Tony's uncanny, melodious baritone seemed so much bigger than his skinny frame could possibly muster; his impeccably chiseled, swashbuckler, dark-haunted looks stood out in the crowd; and his knack for making music by rules devised only by himself are a key to the world of underground music. When navel-gazing prog and over-heated stadium rock'n'roll were the norm—along with cosmic country and Me Generation foppish pop—the Dils were a twin engine of blast-off hooks and catchy melodies that scooted them back towards the 1950s, but they were armed with militant manifestos and punk tirades instead of rockabilly hiccups and tin cans of pomade.

This became most evident on tunes like "Class War," which has remained their signature tune. Though cut in the time period of President Carter, its message remains resilient and contemporary, given America's ever-increasing war stance across the globe and the chasm between wealth and poverty in cities across the country. "I wanna war, between the rich and the poor / I wanna fight and know what I am fighting for … If I'm told to kill / A Cuban or African / There'll be a class war / Right here in America." While Crime wore police outfits and the Weirdos looked like berserk assemblage art, Chip Kinman wore hammer and sickle shirts and the Dils played benefits for the striking Norfolk and Western Railway Workers. They understood punk as a form of praxis, a melding of theory and action. Decades ago, they foreshadowed Antifa.

Plus, the Dils were so damn newfangled and inchoate. The haphazard, furious, and odd drumming early on, on tunes such as "You're Not Blank" and "I Hate the Rich," makes their first forays sound as distinct as full-blown art. It rearranged one's senses. Like hearing the Ramones' fiery discordance, either you felt the antsy pull and sweat-heave of the new and jumped toward the uncertain future, or you were stuck in the mildewed past. The brothers' staggering explosion of bash'n'pop politico agitation made leftism feel more like Lennon than Lenin (oh, the croons of "Tell Her You Love Her" and the Creedence Clearwater Revival-esque "Sound of the Rain"). Plus, unlike Gang Of Four's sometimes obtuse observations the Dils effortlessly wielded an ability to send messages via common expressions—"Mr. Big," especially, with its indignant lyrics such as "… you look so big to others / ….Well I can see you're nothin' / You watch TV to learn the news / Don't switch the station, you'll get confused." They spoke stripped-down teenage polemics, not teen psychosis, and in the Trump era, with a huge portion of American eyes glued to Fox News, the lyrics seem even more pregnant with meaning.

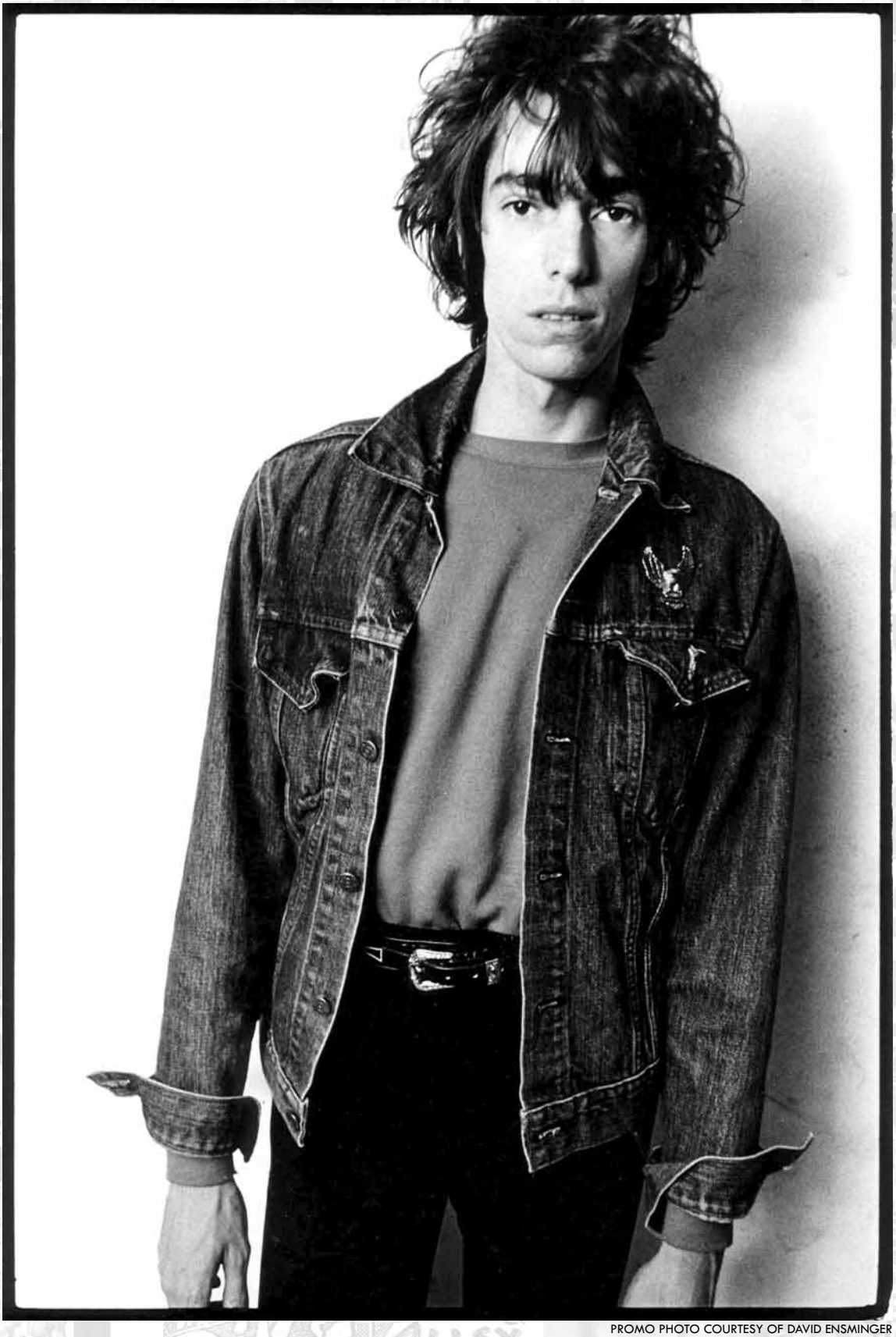
They had cultural heft and weight. They meant it, man. The world would never be the same. It was cultural revolution in real-time as they joined the Zeros, Avengers, Offs, X, and many more in the crusade for real music in an unreal time. As the last vestiges of the 1970s tipped into 1980 and the Dils released their softer, chorus-driven, well-chiseled last tunes like "Red Rockers" and "It's Not Worth It," the musical landscape began to change again. Disco had waned, pop-metal balladry was on the horizon, and new wave had tilted toward total blandness as it swept through the MTV hordes. Hardcore, characterized by gritty subject matter and the feverish velocity of bands like the Germs and Black Flag, severely jolted punk with even more high-energy output, this time bent on further destruction of pop norms. It was severe music driven more and more by different sensibilities.

The Dils did not fit that brand of steadfast, raging style. "Soon after the original bunch of punk rock bands, that's when you started getting the machine-type bands that were consistently hard hitting night after night after night," Tony told me. "It was like there was an almost physical discipline to their shows. I always like things on stage that were a little bit loose or fuzzy around the edge, in the sense that there was room for things to happen musically or performance-wise, so when the machine bands really started happening, it wasn't really my taste."

At the very height of vitriol-filled hardcore, the Kinmans revoked their punk license, headed south to Austin, TX, and formed Rank And File (formed with punk peer Alejandro Escovedo, from the Zeros and The Nuns), which stumped for something more rooted: they opted for restless, sincere, stripped-down twang that felt more like a sawdust-smattered dance floor in Lubbock than the dank graffiti dens of Los Angeles. Later in the 1980s, they formed Blackbird and switched gears (we don't need no stinking drummer!), where they fabricated crystalline, harmony-lined gems like "Quicksand," which should have been played at every high school dance. Then, revolting once again, they formed Cowboy Nation, a keep-it-close-to-the-burlap vision harkening back to Gene Autry and Woody Guthrie—a re-awakening of Americana as a western tale compressed and unpretentious as dusty haiku. "Shenandoah" is particularly lulling and memorable.

I thank Tony for the time he afforded me, for his tales of Little Richard, The Clash, and the Ramones, and so much more. His insight, charm, and sensibilities remain supreme in my recollections. Gone are the days when punks roved like him, though his brother Chip continues to carry that mantle in Ford Madox Ford, which combines the rootsy roadside stomp of later Rank And File with uncompromising post-punk Blackbird nods and smarts. Plus, Chip's forever youthful, honey-baked voice lightens the moody noir of songs like "Dark American Night." The two brothers were cornerstones of American rebel yells and epitomize the punk that helped split up American pop monoculture. Now that Tony is gone, Chip becomes the witness to it all. He can remind us of the original joy.

–David Ensminger

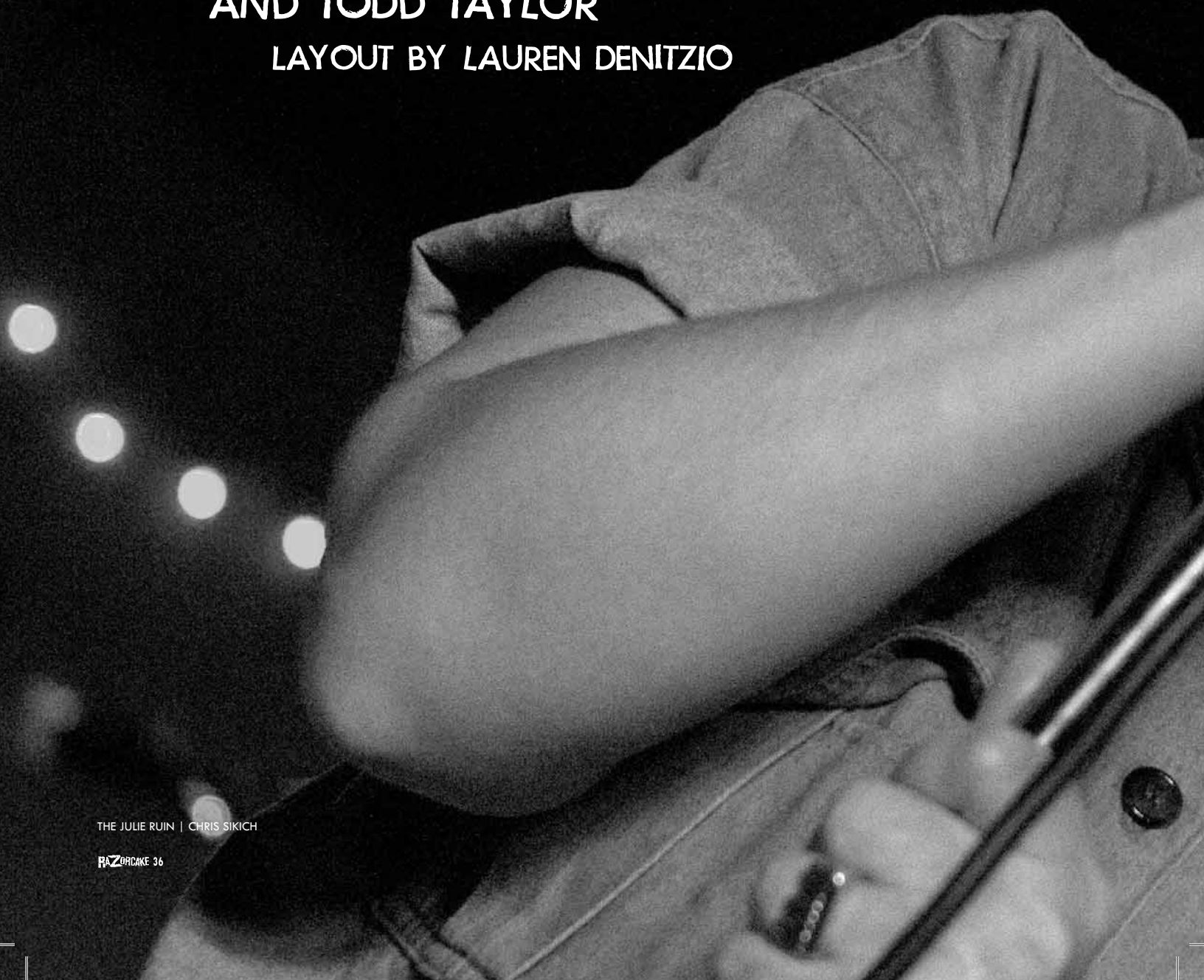


PROMO PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVID ENSMINGER

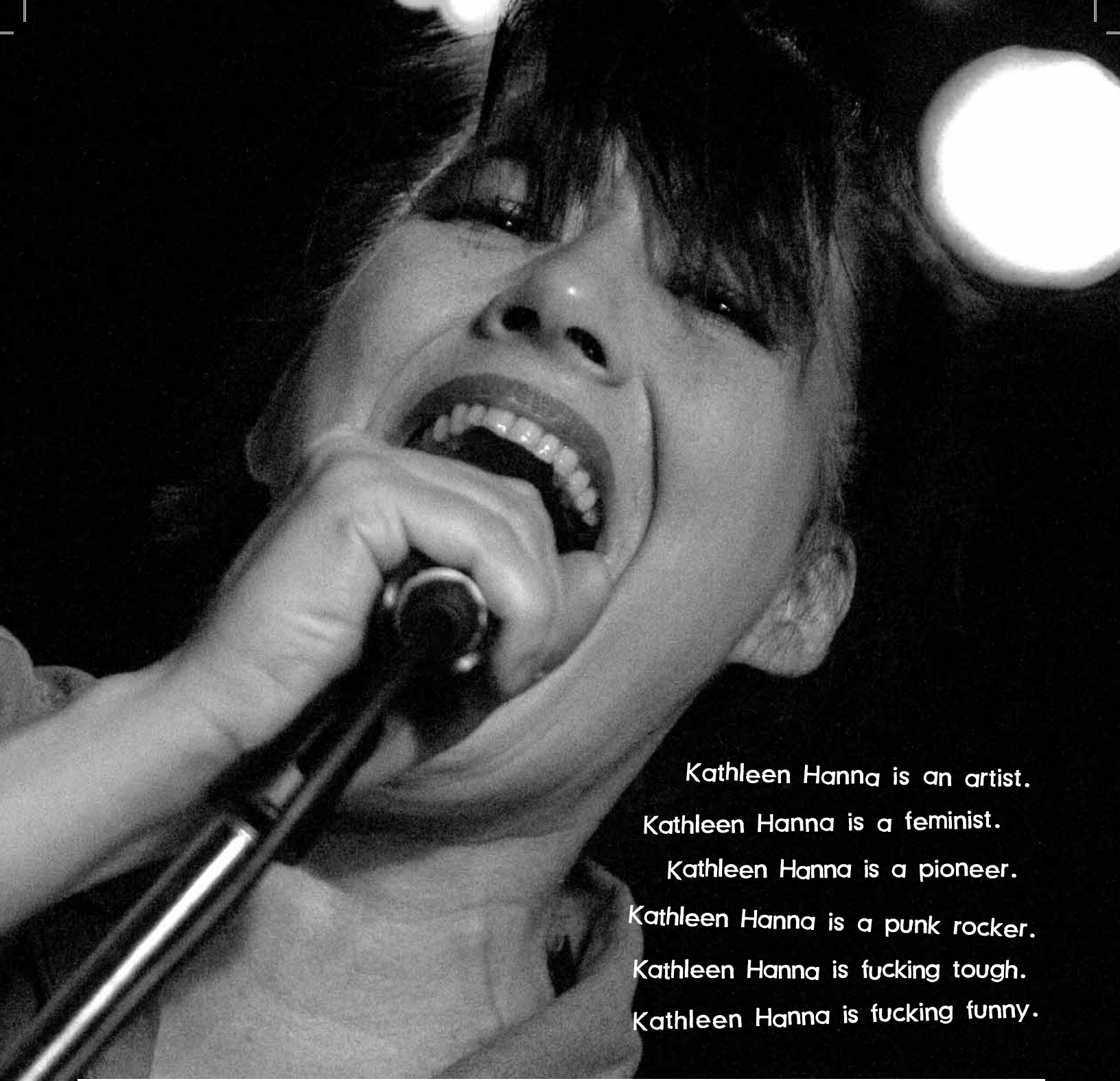
KATHLEEN HANNA

INTERVIEW BY EVER VELASQUEZ
AND TODD TAYLOR

LAYOUT BY LAUREN DENITZIO



THE JULIE RUIN | CHRIS SIKICH



Kathleen Hanna is an artist.

Kathleen Hanna is a feminist.

Kathleen Hanna is a pioneer.

Kathleen Hanna is a punk rocker.

Kathleen Hanna is fucking tough.

Kathleen Hanna is fucking funny.

Let's look back at the late '80s. It was largely a grim time for punk. The first two waves had crashed and much of its initial groundbreaking diversity had been washed out. Punk on a national level was definitely out of vogue; very few clambered to participate compared to earlier in the decade. Violence was prevalent, expected.

A strident, explicitly feminist punk band called Bikini Kill formed in 1990 in Olympia, Wash. Confrontational and unrepentant, it brought out the best and worst in punks. Misogyny, sexism, and patriarchy responded with ugly reactionary displays, calling into question if punk was truly an alternative to the worst aspects of mainstream culture. Was this just the same shit with a different haircut? Bikini Kill was a lighthouse and safe harbor, fore-fronting women, making space for those traditionally pushed down and aside (including, but not limited to, circle pits, workplaces, and on the street). At a time when very few bands were having conversations about gender and sexuality, Bikini Kill used a bullhorn.

I'm not one for heroes or icons, but it's historically accurate to state Bikini Kill was at the center of the riot grrrl movement and served as an important voice in feminism's third wave. It's not an overstatement to say riot grrrl saved lives. A large component of Bikini Kill was its singer and literal mouthpiece, Kathleen Hanna.

Near Bikini Kill's end in 1997, Kathleen began recording a solo record in her bedroom. *Julie Ruin* is personal work. It's both interviewer Ever's and Kathleen's mom's favorite—electronic, intimate, sample-heavy—and provides the sonic bridge to Le Tigre, a band whose stock trades on bouncy, feminist rump shakers. Violence at shows plummeted. LGBTQ inclusion—reminiscent

of punk's first wave in L.A.—skyrocketed. I can't help but think Emma Goldman is smiling from her resting place. Le Tigre had picked the lock. Finally, an inclusive, glittering revolution that was truly danceable.

Le Tigre unfortunately ended due to Kathleen's health issues. She suffered and almost died from shamefully-undiagnosed-for-too-long Lyme disease. Thankfully, she recovered. Looking to flesh out the unrecorded songs from her solo record, The Julie Ruin was formed in 2010, reuniting Kathleen with Kathi Wilcox of Bikini Kill. Goddamn it, this band is really good. More than that, the music's relevant.

There are two versions of punk in my book. There's the contracting punk universe which becomes a dark, cynical, self-parodying, collapsing shell and there's the expanding universe that reveals subtle new spectrums of light and pervades a sense of infinite possibilities. The Julie Ruin is the latter.

This interview, at its essence, is about the courage to restart several times—through darkness and light, through sickness and health—and continue creating truly meaningful work. Kathleen Hanna is responsible for some of my favorite music. I celebrate her entire catalog and love her voice.

Todd: To be honest, I didn't think you'd do this interview.

Kathleen: Of course I would. What else do I have to do today? I was hanging out. I wanna talk about myself, talk about my work. [laughter] I would just be doing this sitting at home in front of the mirror. "Oh, so the first Bikini Kill record... And that's why I did *that*... I was drunk when I wrote 'Feels Blind.'" That's what I do when I'm at home. I talk about my records. [laughs]

Todd: I was interested in your relationship with Joan Jett because she helped produce one of the very first Bikini Kill records.

Kathleen: She did.

Todd: She did the "New Radio"/"Rebel Girl" single. That was 1993. You guys have been in contact. She was name checked in "Hot Topic" by Le Tigre. She was part of the interview pool for *The Punk Singer*. What's your relationship with her?

Ever: Also you did that intro for her book (*Joan Jett*).

Kathleen: She has a documentary out, *Bad Reputation*. I'm actually in it and I'm the last voice in the film. No one knows because it was a narration. They just used the audio. I said something really corny like [in "In a World…" voice], "Joan Jett, not only opened the door for women in music, she kicked the whole door down!" Totally ridiculous. "She dismantled the door with her teeth!" [laughter] But I love Joan. Basically, I don't have a relationship with my actual sister who's four years older than me and Joan is not that much older than me. She started a lot younger than me, so people get that misconception. Her and her manager-slash-best friend Kenny Laguna kind of became my family in the '90s; replaced my dad and my sister, who were no longer in my life for various reasons.

But yeah, I love her. She's so fucking smart, which a lot of people don't know about her. She follows politics very closely. She's really involved with kids in music. I really respect her. At a time when we really needed a champion, she showed up in the lives of the members of Bikini Kill, especially for me. She'd gone through some of the same things I was going through. We didn't even talk about stuff like that. To be near each other and be working together just felt right. You know when you meet somebody and you're like, "Oh, this is my family"? You can see that person every ten years and it feels like you were just hanging out yesterday. I love her. I just saw her at Sundance for the premier of the movie, *Bad Reputation*.

My dad had a Xerox machine at his work when he got a promotion. I was like, "I GOTTA GET MY BUTT ON THAT THING." I was so psyched.

Ever: With that, when Bikini Kill first formed, did you ever think of the impact that it would have close to thirty years from now?

Kathleen: Absolutely not. I didn't even think we'd make it out of Olympia.

Todd: Why is that?

Kathleen: We were just a small town band. Of course we had visions of what we wanted to do. We had a mission statement: We want more girls in punk rock. It was more selfish just because we kept looking around and not seeing or hearing the bands that we wanted. We had Babes In Toyland. We were in the Northwest, so we had The Obituaries, who were great. The Black Wedge Tour, which was Mecca Normal and a bunch of other Canadian artists came down. This band Kreviss, which was fourteen women who all played guitar, put out a great single. There were all these Sub Pop singles that were coming out that had a lot of women and Lunachicks, and later the Red Aunts.

There were a lot of women in bands, but we really felt like having feminism in our music was a big problem for people. I thought we'd go on tour around the country, but I didn't think thirty years later I'd be talking about it. I thought, "Oh, we'll be a band for a couple years. Whatever." I didn't even really think about it, actually. 'Cause when you're that age, early twenties, I wasn't going, "What am I going to do in the future?" I was like, "As long as I don't have to work fast food again, I'm fine." [laughter] "Life is great."

Todd: You use a mix of photocopy art, hand-drawn art, and handmade items in your album artwork pretty much all the way through your records. What was the impetus for this?

Kathleen: God, nobody asks me that, and I have made a lot of record covers.

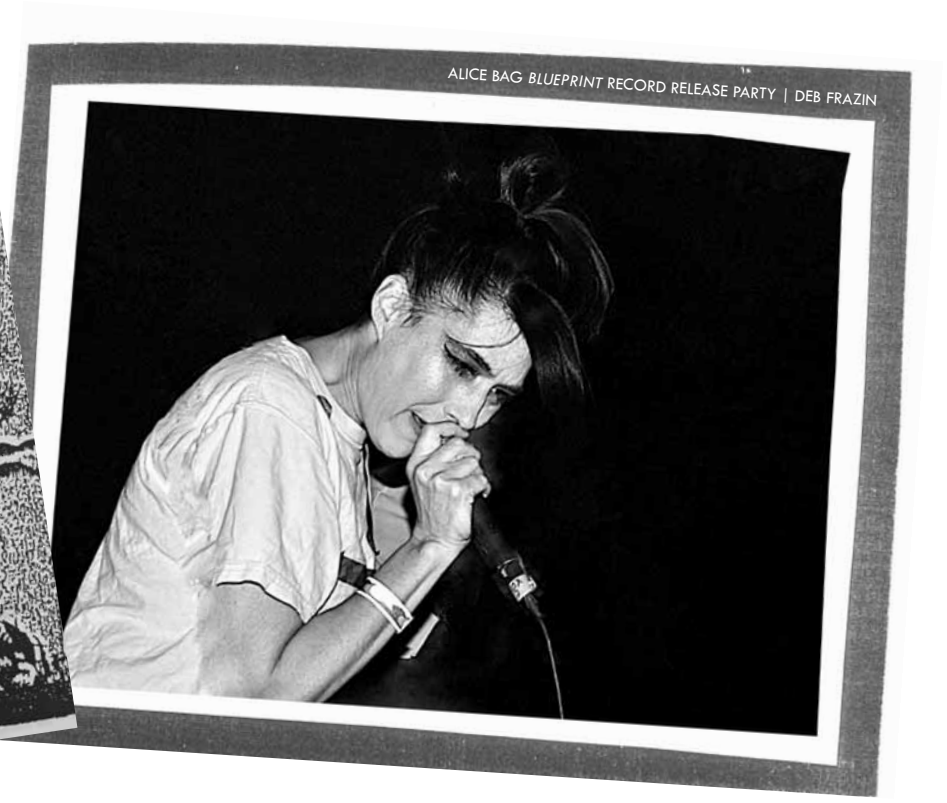
Todd: I think a lot of your work is iconic. When people of think of zines from the '90s, a lot of the riot grrrl stuff comes to the forefront. You also dialed into the limitations of photocopiers, which I think is a lost or dying art.

Kathleen: I was obsessed with Xerox since they were called dittos.

Ever: Yeah! They smelled so good.

Kathleen: The ditto machine! "Oh, I really love the Kinks." And they'd be like, "Ditto!" Ditto, to those of you who are dear whippersnappers, means, "I agree!" It also means, "Me also!" [laughter] I was really into photocopies. My dad had a Xerox machine at his work when he got a promotion. I was like, "I gotta get my butt on that thing." I was so psyched. I was like, "What can I do with this?" When I lived in Olympia, a friend of mine worked at Kinko's. He would just let me use the copiers for free. Then they got this machine called the Mita. That

COURTESY OF JENNIFER WHITEFORD



ALICE BAG *BLUEPRINT* RECORD RELEASE PARTY | DEB FRAZIN

you could pick red or black. Then, all of a sudden, I had the two-color option and I was like, "My whole world has changed1" [laughter] Back when we first started, our option was using black and white art for our cover because that was all our label could afford, so that's what they did.

But I had a lot of good friends who were photographers. I went to school for photography. Actually, we started a feminist art gallery that did a lot of stuff with photography. Our *Demirep* single. My friend Heidi made the cover for the *Rebel Girl* one. So I used other people's photography a lot. I made the covers, assembled them—I used a Tammy Rae Carland photograph for *Pussy Whipped*. I really like using things that are three-dimensional and then making them flat and I really like the combination of flat with a more three-dimensional look. I would actually put glitter and write "Pussy Whipped" and then have it photographed. We didn't have computers in the same way we do now. It wasn't really an option.

When we were being courted by major labels, which we all rejected—but we wanted to meet them and ask questions about Prince. "You worked with Prince. What was that like?" And they were like, "I thought we were supposed to be talking about your band." But we knew we weren't going to join the label, we just wanted to get some cool stories.

We were being shown around one of the major record labels—I think it was Warner Brothers—and we were going through the art department. I saw these two people who were working to try to make something on a computer that looked like a fanzine and they were really having a hard time. I was like, "Excuse me. What are you doing?" They showed me and I was like, "You know what you can do? Just take out some scissors and cut stuff and then you'll get paste-up marks." They were going through all this trouble. [laughter]

Ever: Minds blown.

Todd: "So you use the scissors tool in the software?"

Kathleen: I was like, oh my god, they're bending over backwards. I was watching all this stuff—the aesthetics of fanzines were being co-opted by everybody. Beyond MTV, *Alternative Nation*. In the '90s, Taco Bell had a tray liner that was designed like a fanzine and said stuff about revolution. Mascara became revolutionary. Everything was revolutionary. [In old English/Churchill-y voice], "Revolution now!" [laughter]

So, yeah, I like making art and I'm not really that good at photography, I realized. It's not really my medium. But I do really love collage. I love color so much that the new invention of a printer at your house has totally blown my mind. But there was nobody I was really copying. I was just like any artist thinking, "What's a way that I can visually represent what this sounds like?"

Todd: It also matched the visual tools you had. I remember the first scanner that I got to see in 1996. It was $3,000 and it took forever to scan. At the end, "Oh my god, there's that picture on my computer screen!"

Ever: Looking back at your zine making, you're part of creating some of the zines that shaped my life. Before zines, I felt alone in my thoughts and they opened a whole world for me of people who were survivors and shared a lot of the same experiences I did. Le Tigre did have a zine for one tour, I believe.

Kathleen: Oh, yeah. That was one that Sadie made. That was all drawings.

Ever: Does The Julie Ruin have one?

Kathleen: No. Because I'm more into the idea of using the web now. I just think that there are choices now. 'Cause people are like, "If there was internet when riot grrrl started, would you have used it?" Absolutely. Of course. It wasn't like, "Oh, we're trying to be all analog." That's only something now. As artists, we have choices of what mediums we can use.

The thing that's really bizarre about being someone who made fanzines pre-internet is that when things from your fanzines get put online out of context—because we didn't even have the knowledge that the world wide web was going to exist—when we made our first fanzines, the first *Bikini Kill* fanzines. Later, I made one about addiction called *April Fools Day* that was red and black. I never dated them. I didn't copyright them. If I had forethought, I would have dated every page. "Look, I wrote this when I was twenty-two." Because it's weird to be in your forties and have people referring to something you wrote when you were in your early twenties. Some of this stuff I still stand by and I feel really great about. Some of it, I don't.

Ever: Where do you think that zine making is going now?

Kathleen: I don't know if it's still having the same function now that there are blogs and stuff. Where do you see it going? Because I feel like you're more in that world and I'm not in that world.

Ever: I get to go to a lot of the zine fests representing *Razorcake* and Puro Pinche Poetry: Gritos Del Barrio, and I've seen a resurgence of technology. I interacted with one woman who made a zine where she hands you your phone and it has an app and

I still like zines for the fact of THE PERSONAL CONNECTION. Reading a lot of them, I CAN BE ANYWHERE.

COURTESY OF JENNIFER WHITEFORD

then you scan it and all the illustrations come to life. And there's music, animation. It's more on the technical side.

Todd: I have a very complicated answer to this. In certain ways, I find it's a class distinction. A zine that Razorcake's made, I can hand it to you and you don't need any electronic device. It doesn't crash. And when you're done with it, you can keep it, or "Oh yeah, I think somebody else can benefit from this," and hand it off. I understand that not everybody has the capability to print their own zines. I am still, years later, so excited we have that photocopier sitting right there. But that was a capital investment. It took us fifteen years to afford it.

Ever: I get excited every time I see it.

Kathleen: Well, clearly I got excited. I tried to fuck it when I came in here. [laughter] "Could you all just turn around? I just to have to have my way with this Xerox machine."

Todd: On the other hand, if somebody has the ability to get on the internet, they have a broader access. They don't have to have the benefit of going to a zine fest where Ever's tabling and picking up the zine. There are questions of exclusivity. We try to be as open and as reasonably priced as possible and keeping zine making as a component. We realize a lot of people are on social media, but we've realized as an organization, first and foremost, we make really good zines and we're in a digital era.

Kathleen: And that's the art form that you chose. You can't read a blog in the bathtub, at least I wouldn't. I'm not going to bring my phone or computer into the tub and then there I'm like a shrimp tempura. I still like zines for the fact of the personal connection. Reading a lot of them, I can be anywhere. I can be on a train. I can just sit there and actually relate or not relate. I can hate it.

One of my favorite zines I ever read—and I think part of it was because a lot of zines I got were about abuse issues and it was very overwhelming because there were so many, especially in the '90s. I got this zine where a woman who was a hairdresser went around to all the Fantastic Sams. It's like Supercuts. She basically did a tour of the United States, which had the Fantastic Sams. She'd get her hair cut. Then she did reviews. At the end—you know how hair stylists always end up with super short hair? She just did a review about everything about each Fantastic Sams. She had drawings of people.

I really love hand drawings, but I'm into type. I'm into using handwriting for titles then using some kind of type or font for the writing because I find it easier to read. As I age, I can't read stuff written in red. I can't read tiny stuff. My other super big pet peeve, and this goes back to the '90s, was there was this horrible magazine. It was supposed to be post modern. *Raygun*. They'd put interviews upside down and backwards. I'm into the idea of acknowledging that readers bring themselves to a text. It's work and that the work that you create as a reader reading the text in bringing yourself to it—and the work that you partake in to understand a text—that engagement is the art, to me.

Raygun was doing this thing where it was making me work too hard. And it was a straight white guy who did it. [laughter] And the whole thing was like, "I'm going to confuse you with all my eff'n fonts." I was like, "I don't have time for this bullshit. I just want to read The Breeders interview. Leave me alone. I don't want to have to get out a fucking magnifying glass, go on a Twister board, and contort my body to be able to read this."

But that kind of stuff in fanzines, where it's really difficult to read, I know some of it is because people are working really hard and they're very immediate and they're doing stuff like that. But I feel like, "Hey, your voice. I want to hear it." So make it legible.

Also, the more drawings people can do—I love the drawings. Photography. Seeing people's art in the context of a zine, it's made for a zine. It's really a wonderful thing for me. So much more than seeing it on the internet. Having it be a part of someone's writing. Because that's what also set zines apart from books, the combination of words and image and of appropriation. Reappropriation—people being able to take back things that were stolen from them within the context of art-making practice.

Ever: What do you think about the views of riot grrrl, excluding people in its movement? I know you can't be held responsible for it, or for the movement itself and how it made people feel. Some don't feel it was addressed or explained.

Kathleen: Well, yeah. One example was—riot grrrl, we did a convention in the '90s. There was a workshop that I did with another woman about unlearning racism. And even the title now, I'm like, "Wait. I'm teaching women of color to unlearn racism? What is that about? I need to unlearn racism." So there were a lot of mistakes that I personally made.

I feel having white women on most of the imagery sucked. I feel—and I was a part of that, having my face plastered everywhere, which I didn't have control over. But still, I don't think that that was helpful in making people who don't look like me feel included. And I also feel like there was a cursory attempt at intersectionality before we were, as a culture, talking about that. It didn't go deep enough. Putting flyers in neighborhoods where I don't live—I could have done a lot more.

I feel like what I learned is we started something that was very local and was based in our punk scene and not thinking it was going to become anything. It wasn't called riot grrrl. It was just a bunch of women getting together, talking about starting bands. It wasn't that until later. The media called it that. Then we said, "Okay. That's a cool name. Fine." It was catchy.

But I look back and I'm like, "But it started from a white middle class perspective." And anything that starts that way without working class women's voices, without women of color's voices, without trans voices, without a lot of different voices, it's gonna stay in that same lane. And while people definitely have taken riot grrrl to some other level in different places, there's still this weird white contingent. And I always think of it—like my visual metaphors. There's this sticker and it's some little white girl, like Beverly Cleary-type character, and it says "All girls are riot grrrls" and I always fucking hated that sticker. I'm sorry if whoever made it is reading this because every girl is not a riot grrrl and that's fucking bullshit. The whole point was women can call themselves what they want and be whatever they want. It always really bothered me. Then it starts being another punk rule.

Ever: For me, personally, during those times, I would go to those shows. In certain areas in California I would show up and I was the brown girl or maybe there'd be another brown girl and I'd go and talk with them and we'd seem more united. Yeah, they'd throw looks at us or whatever. I was like, "I'm not going anywhere." The band's not saying directly, "We don't want brown people here. We don't want queer POC here." I'm going to continue to come to the shows and make space.

Kathleen: That's awesome. 'Cause it makes space for other people. We did that just as white girls in our scene where we were the three girls who showed up at shows. But we didn't have fortitude. We stopped coming when all the boys started beating each other up for being long hairs or short hairs. "Are you a SHARP or are you a skinhead?" I was like, "I'm getting out of here. I'm going to go to reggae shows. I'm going to get stoned and dance."

But, yeah, I don't feel like it's been addressed as much as it should be, but I feel like there's a lot—Mimi Nguyen wrote an excellent piece about race and riot grrrl that people can look up online. There's an article in *Bitch* magazine, a year or two ago, also about the lack of representation of women of color in riot grrrl and I think, specifically, there's some critique of the movie that was made about me (*The Punk Singer*), which I completely felt the exact same way about.

Ever: What was the critique?

Kathleen: It's all white people. But you can give someone a list of people to interview and if they only interview the white people on that list.... It's not my movie. It was somebody else's.

Ever: But you don't know if some people declined an interview.

Kathleen: I do know.

Ever: Oh, okay. All right. Never mind.

Kathleen: [laughter] Nothing against the filmmaker. I had my own issues with it, but it wasn't my movie. I was just in it.

Ever: What do you think about the movement and the struggles today? I think that for even those who felt excluded, they saw the significance of what riot grrrl stood for and what it's done for the whole process, then and now. Do you feel that we're on a more unified front now, with feminism being more intersectional?

Kathleen: Shit. [laughter] I don't know. I think that, with everything, things are better in certain pockets and things are worse in certain pockets and things are exactly the same in certain pockets. But from what I see of people writing to me on the internet and letters, I get excited because I feel like we put our necks out and said stuff that wasn't always very popular.

We didn't do it perfectly but if we don't start talking there's not going to be a conversation. If we wait until everybody is perfect, there's no conversation. We put ourselves out there and the idea was that we were asking a lot of questions. It was for other people to continue and to make what we were doing into something better or into something that related to themselves. For all the mistakes I've made, I still don't regret them because my hope is always that someone's going to be like, "Ewww. She said, 'Eat meat / hate blacks / beat your fucking wife / It's all the same thing.' (Bikini Kill, "Liar") That's not right." You know what I mean? That's a stupid lyric. I'm going to write something better. That's my hope.

CHYNNA MONFORTE

I remember seeing Fugazi. I was one of very few women at a Fugazi show. I was like, "Oh my god. This band is life changing because they're amazing." But then they played the song "Suggestion," which is about street harassment. I was like, "Jesus! Men care about that? Do they even know that happens?" I was like, "Guys in the punk scene care about that?" Then, it took, later, "But why was Ian MacKaye writing in the first person?" But that moment changed my life and it made me feel like, "Hey, I'm going to have some guys who are going to have my back if I come out as a feminist in this scene." They didn't do it perfectly, but they did it, and thank you.

So for all of the mistakes that I've made in ways of not being as intersectional as I would like to have been, I do feel like people are smart and they're like, "That's stupid, but this other thing she did was cool." And also the idea of organizing is cool. But we've got to get away from essentialist notions of what it means to be a woman. I feel like that's the problem with riot grrrl and with keeping that name is that it can be very essentialist. I think gender is rightly so acknowledged as being much more fluid. I want the younger generation to come up with a better name. [laughter]

Ever: There you go. We have to keep on creating, right?

Todd: Just because you mentioned Fugazi, here's a quote from you: "I always feel like I'm the female Ian MacKaye but with fewer morals." Can you expand on that?

Kathleen: I did feel like I was the girl Ian MacKaye for awhile. I looked back at stuff that he'd gone through. Everybody collapsing what he was trying to do with straight edge and making it this ridiculous joke. So I understood what it felt like to be a figurehead for something that you didn't really want to be, but also be a total attention hound, because both he and I love attention. He's super charming and really funny, and flawed, like everybody. I guess he just seems like somebody who has more of a moral compass than I do.

Todd: Do you have a particular thing you were thinking of?

Kathleen: No. I feel like he figured out his ethical game at some point.

Todd: Very early on.

Kathleen: My ethical game is changing and shifting as the days move on. One day, something I think is an ethical decision is not an ethical decision. I guess I'm more of a Situationist in term of ethics. I chose my ethics in a site-specific manner. I feel like Ian has a more over-arching connection to ethical reality. Morality? But I don't think of him as a moralist or a Puritan or any of that bullshit that people say about him. That's not fair.

Todd: I think he set up a structure very early on and it worked really well.

Kathleen: They were a great band. Besides the song "Guilty of Being White," which is really hard to stomach at this juncture, I like Minor Threat and I fuckin' love Rites Of Spring. Don't even get me started.

Todd: I didn't know until recently that they only played around twelve shows.

Kathleen: Yeah. Has anybody created the phrase "dreamo"? From emo? So an emo dream boat. I guess Guy Picciotto would be the original "dreamo."

Ever: I'm going to draw him as that now.

Kathleen: I feel like he was the original dreamo and there's tons of dreamos since then.

Todd: Side topic. Rites Of Spring was the first time I heard of "emo-core," in around 1986. Emo-core was way before emo. Just throwing that out there... Can we talk about capitalism for a second? [laughter]
Kathleen: Love it!
Todd: Couple things. These are not...
Kathleen: Just say it. I don't care. I'm like a doctor. You can tell me anything.
Todd: Le Tigre's third album, *This Island*, was put out on Universal. Direct quote: "I just felt like I couldn't keep bitching about majors if I didn't learn anything about them." So what'd you learn?
Kathleen: That I do not like being on a major label.
Ever: How was Ric Ocasek (The Cars)?
Kathleen: Oh, Ric was great.
Todd: He did the Bad Brains record (*Rock for Light*) too, right?
Kathleen: Did he? I didn't know that. He was awesome. It was exciting because we got to do stuff like that. "I would love to work with Ric Ocasek." Okay, you can make that happen. Yeah, I wish I'd wished for some other things that were even more intense, but we really didn't have the budget. The thing I learned is that being in a feminist band isn't going to make you money, ever. Maybe, yeah, at some point. It was just how we looked, what our ages were. I don't know. Basically, the label told us—so we've made this record and they're like—"Well, you guys are missing the boat on this. We're going to put all of backing behind the new JoJo record." Do you guys know who JoJo is?
Ever and Todd: No.
Kathleen: She was a teenager who had a song called, "Leave (Get Out)." So it was sort of like riot grrrl lite. It was her sophomore effort, maybe. Or her junior year effort. It was her follow-up record to the "Leave" one that was coming out the same time as *This Island*, our major label debut. They were like, "Yeah, we're just going to put our money behind Jojo." And then we started making jokes that they actually meant JoJo from K-Ci & JoJo.
Ever: That would be amazing.
Kathleen: They actually did some sort of reunion tour when Le Tigre was doing it. We were like, "We have to hook up with K-Ci & JoJo."
Ever: "Could we open for you guys?"
Kathleen: Yeah. But, I definitely realized that people worked real jobs and there were lots of cool people at the label—in the art department, especially—who were really great to work with. It was so nice that we had this big idea for what our cover was going to look like and it ended being just a simple picture was the best thing.

So, a lot of stuff I learned was, "Oh, I already know what I'm doing. I'm already doing it right." But, also, I'm terrible at business and so I do need to get help with that kind of stuff. But not major label help. But it was an interesting experience. I thought it was really weird to see most of my male peers who came of age as musicians at the same time as me had number one hits, made a lot of money through their work. I wanted to tour on a tour bus and I got to do that. I'd only been on a tour bus, visiting my male contemporaries. I was like, "I want to see what that world is like." I didn't like it as much as van touring. But I wanted to see what it was like. There were parts of it that were great. I did need a little more distance from fans at the time 'cause I was a little bit overwhelmed and that offered me that. But, at the same time, it just wasn't for me.

But I'm glad we did it because I feel like women need to try out all different things and not just have it be like—speaking of ethics and morality—growing up in the '90s and the divide of "major labels are awful and indie labels are great." There are a lot of people who don't live in a place where indie labels are accessible to them. I learned about punk rock on TV watching the show *Night Flight* and I actually lived, probably, five miles from Ian MacKaye. I had no idea what was going on in the scene, or that there was a scene because I listened to Molly Hatchet, Southern fried rock. I wasn't hanging out in that world, so I'm always cognizant that there are people who—that's their goal, is to sign to a major label and who am I to say that that's a bad goal? If that's their goal, that's their choice. I was lucky that I went to college in Olympia, Wash. and K Records was there. So I got to see that it didn't have to be that way. But that was my personal circumstances and everyone felt the same.
Todd: Coming from a fanzine perspective, we just try to make as much space as possible for independent and under-heard voices by setting up certain parameters. We don't accept major label advertising because they've got a PR division. They've got money behind them. We want to be able to amplify the voices that don't have that resource. But that's why I'm not witch-hunty about it.
Kathleen: You guys, I'm not insulted at all, in any way, shape, or form by that question. The whole reason I do things—part of my art is also my business practices and the way that I choose to do business in the world. I just don't think we're going to change capitalism by trying to be the opposite of it. I feel like we need to challenge it by creating businesses that operate in ethical manners and create jobs for people so they can live a decent life, have their needs met, and their healthcare met. We're not going to do that if it's like, "Here's The Man and here's us, and we're the opposite."

Because any time you define yourself in opposition to something, you're allowing them to define who you are. I want my legacy, in terms of my business practices, to be that I tried a bunch of different stuff. I figured out what worked for me. I set that up. But I wasn't afraid to do things that were going to make me unpopular. I was like, "Hey, if you're going to not like me because I did one major label record out of twenty albums I've put out, then go fuck yourself." I don't care.

I already saw how far punk music could open up to feminism. How far can pop music? Will they let us in the door? That's the other thing that people don't realize—feminist artists do not have huge amounts of opportunities thrown at us. The amount of money we got from signing to that label

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was *pa*-thetic. We got barely any money. It was like we were so "lucky" to be getting that money and everybody thought, "Oh, they got like a million dollars." We didn't get anywhere near a million dollars. We didn't get anywhere near what Jawbreaker or whoever would get. I'm not bitter about it or anything, it's just something that I want people to know is—as feminists artists—we were offered a miniscule amount at signing. A lot less than JoJo, [sarcastically] who was way more feminist than me, clearly. Nothing against JoJo.

Todd: Ever and I both saw you perform at Alice Bag's record release party for *Blueprint*, where you sang "77," not the year, but that women make seventy-seven cents on the dollar, compared to men. It's shameful, as a culture and a society, that this disparity still exists.

Ever: You always go hard.

Kathleen: [Loud laughing.]

Ever: You say what you're going to say, and that's what I like about you, to this day. I think about a lot of the stuff you've said in speeches. It resonates with me.

Kathleen: Thank you.

Ever: For example, "It's about women not dying in back alley abortions. But it's also about women saying 'My life is worth it, too. I deserve control over my life and my healthcare.' Imagine if a man was told that you cannot have the decision to have a vasectomy." Or, "I'm here because I will always remember how terrible and desperate and sick I felt that day and how the people at the clinic helped me even though I only had twelve dollars."

Kathleen: Yeah.

Ever: And that's life, especially for us. Do you have anything to give us today?

Kathleen: Like what? Well, I have a new catch phrase: "Frankincense and myrrh!" [laughter] That's my new thing I have to give to you. I've been trying to start it for years. It hasn't caught on, but I feel like this interview is my moment. But, I really don't have a gem of wisdom.

Ever: I don't believe that.

Todd: So, I want to go back to your business acumen.

Kathleen: Or lack thereof.

Todd: No, you were the top cheese board seller...

Kathleen: In Junior Achievement. Don't bring up J.A. I'm going to show you my certificate.

Todd: Half joking, half serious—what did you learn that you adapted going forward?

Kathleen: Wait, was it an interview where I talked about being in Junior Achievement.

Todd: Yeah.

Kathleen: So, for the readers who don't know everything about me, which is everyone—because I didn't even know that this interview existed. So I was in this weird teen club at my high school called Junior Achievement and it was, basically, young capitalists, entrepreneurs. I only did it because this hot guy raised his hand before me and I wanted to get in his pants. I was like, "I'll do that club."

I learned about buying in bulk, profit. It did help me in terms of merch. If you're in a band—I know you hate doing this—but right before your last song, you've gotta tell people about your merch because your sales will double or triple if you mention it from the stage. Because people will be like, "Oh, yeah. I really liked that. I want to support them." Or, "My cousin would really like a Julie Ruin fidget spinner." We still have two thousand of those if anybody wants one. Yeah, it was really funny that I was in this weird club and that's basically the only business class I ever took in my life. I ended up selling T-shirts and learning things like, "If I stand behind the T-shirt table and offer to sign stuff, we'll sell more." Which is awful. It grosses me out. So, usually I don't do it.

The thing of not using major label advertisers, for me, "If you want to give me money, give me money." With press and stuff

I want my legacy to be that I TRIED A BUNCH OF DIFFERENT STUFF. I figured out what worked for me. I set that up. But I WASN'T AFRAID TO DO THINGS THAT WERE GOING TO MAKE ME UNPOPULAR.

like that, I'll do just about anything, except I'm not going to do *The Wizard Times* or whatever creepy white supremacists… The Washington Wizards changed their name from the Bullets to the Wizards. Good job, guys. *Think*! Anyways.

Ever: So you're not going to go on a Kanye rant?

Kathleen: This whole thing has been a Kanye rant, but just not as entertaining. No, I think one of the interesting things I was thinking of when you were talking about not having major label or big business/corporate advertising in your zines, with your podcasts—one of the things we have to look at when we're creating community is that we're not fucking test markets. We're not creating fans so that somebody else can "No Doubt" them away from us. [laughter]

Ever: Eeeeyyyy!

Kathleen: See, you know what I mean. I don't even have to explain it.

Ever: That's the speech of wisdom right there.

Kathleen: We're actually creating community. We're not doing this to then have people advertise to our scene. Or to have people take the work that we're doing, then take out anything substantial about it, and just take what it looks like.

Todd: The visual aesthetic without the context.

Kathleen: Right. Or be like, "Everyone who reads *Razorcake* are total tastemakers, so how do we get to them?" That's part of the thing to think about, too. A lot of times, corporations—they're looking to us.

Ever: Definitely.

Kathleen: All they do is rip us off. The thing we have as artists is we just keep making stuff, so I don't care. I'm not going to sit around and bitch about girl power being on a Target T-shirt. I'm just going to keep doing what I'm doing. The thing that really offends me is that when there's real community activism happening; it gets turned into a commodity by people from outside the community. I find that to be such a despicable practice. It can then cause a community to end up having to talk about being co-opted all the time instead of talking about real issues that need to be talked about. Instead of making art that you want to make, you're sitting there talking about being co-opted all the time. How do we go against that? That just pulls you off your vision track.

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Todd: Since we do a zine that has so many contributors, I would hate for someone who's written a very thoughtful, intelligent article and then next to it is an advertisement for something we fundamentally don't agree with.

Kathleen: All of a sudden, your whole community is turned off. We're also in an internet culture, where we reading horrific #MeToo stories and in the middle of it, a fucking ad with a diet pill's on it. And it's, "Do you want to see what the girls from *Facts of Life*'s boobs look like now?" You know what I mean? "I just read a #MeToo movement story about a sixteen-year-old's breast being groped and now this is what you're giving me?" So, when we're making independent work, we don't have to deal with that shit. That's part of the thing of not making any money anyways. We don't have to take shit from people.

Todd: Also, you can tell people to go fuck themselves.

Kathleen: I'm not paid enough.

Ever: We've been approached.

Todd: The last one was, "We'll drink all your liquor, but we're not going to mention your name." [laughter]

Ever: For your song "I'm with Her," where you were giving support to Hillary Clinton, what was the strongest criticism you received for that?

Kathleen: Oh, I honestly don't know because I didn't pay attention. I think it was, "The song sucked." And I was like, "Okay." I don't care. If you don't like it, don't listen to it. But I felt like I had to do something because I was terrified of Trump being president. It might not be popular and it might make people think I'm stupid, but I'm not going to stay silent because people are embarrassed to be associated with Hillary because of her emails and Benghazi. Yeah, has she made

THE JULIE RUIN | CHRIS SIKICH

some unfortunate decisions. The way that she talked to one of the leaders of the Black Lives Matter movement was hideous. When I saw that, I was really upset.

But, at the same time, I went to a Martha Rosler talk and she said this thing about voting. She's like, "It's not a moral decision. It's a practical decision." And that's how I felt. Even though, yes, I have my issues with Hillary Clinton and I don't agree with everything she's ever done in her life, I still would like a pilot to be flying the plane that I am on and not some guy who sells jeans. He's never ever been on a plane. "I'm gonna fly this plane." Your toilet gets stopped up, you don't go, "Ah, I'm going to get somebody who sells paperclips to fix this." I want somebody who's a plumber. A licensed plumber, hopefully.

Ever: Of course. If she changes her mind and runs in 2020, is she going to have your support?

Kathleen: It depends on who else is running.

Todd: Two follow-up questions. Was the music for that song originally going to be used for a tampon commercial?

Kathleen: It was.

Todd: Was it used?

Kathleen: No, I wish. It's been my dream to write a song for a tampon commercial. Jo (Johanna Fateman) actually wrote the music for that. Somebody had said, "Oh this tampon place is looking like an ad." So she wrote that and sent it in. If they took it, I was going to maybe write lyrics for it. [sings] "I'm free in my white skirt! My white zip-up pants! Here I am!" with daisies. [laughter] But, it was really funny that we used the maybe-being-a-tampon-commercial thing for Hillary.

Todd: It fits. It works.

Kathleen: Yeah. "I'm with Her," could have been like, "I'm in white... shorts! that is." I don't know.

Todd: I want to explore a criticism that gets tossed back to feminism a lot of times. I'm going to talk from a DIY punk perspective—"You're just preaching to the converted. All people know this." Which I think is such bullshit for two main reasons. One, people who are religious or right wing, no one is saying, "Why are you going to that megachurch? Why are you watching Fox News?" Well, they're doing it because they're reinforcing their faith and they're also introducing people to new concepts, or slowing those concepts down. So, before this interview...

Kathleen: You went to church?

Ever: A megachurch?

Todd: No, I went to the church of Kathleen Hanna. I listened to so many of your records that I own, I watched a lot of YouTube lectures you've given.

Kathleen: That is so scary.

Todd: And you turned me on to Jo Freeman. Wow, she has amazing essays. "The Tyranny of Structurelessness" really opened my mind and made me re-envision you. I had an image of Kathleen Hanna in my brain from being a punk rocker for a long time and being a fan, but newly understanding that, "Maybe Kathleen didn't ask to become the figurehead of riot grrrl. Didn't ask to become a figurehead of the third wave of feminism." To have all that stuff thrust on you is a terrible weight. Thinking in those terms, for someone who is coming to riot grrrl and feminism today, what would be some things to read be exposed to?

Kathleen: Oh, god. I should have looked up my list before I got here. Princess Nokia. A lot. I would look to second wave feminism and read about it because a lot of what happened for the third wave was that we got pitted against the second wave and they were called essentialists. They got thrown in what I call the "essentialists trashcan," where it was like, "Oh, they're all 'men are this one thing and women are this other thing,' and, 'They're anti-sex,' and 'It's all white women.'" A lot of these things—some of it was true. But the stereotype of hairy legs/hate men—within the more intellectually rigorous communities—people also were promulgating stereotypes about the theorists of the second wave.

So, I would suggest going back and reading some of that actual work with a critical eye towards lack of intersectionality towards a lot of the anti-trans rhetoric that has grown from certain offshoots of that movement. But there are fringe elements—we were just talking about Christianity—there's total crazy right wing nut jobs and there's

BIKINI KILL | ERIC NAKAMURA

It's been my dream to WRITE A SONG FOR A TAMPON COMMERCIAL. "I'm free in my white skirt! My white zip-up pants! Here I am!" with daisies. (laughter)

my friend who's a female pastor. You can't really say, "Oh, all second wave was this." So if you're saying, "Oh, all second wave was this" in your head or you're reacting against it, or you're saying "All third wave was this," and you're reacting against it, go actually read the material. I'm not going to say certain authors because you should find them yourself. There's the internet that you can type in—it's easier now. Go to the source. The main thing I have is that people just do a cursory reading. It feels like people just read the back of a book. They don't even read the book and they start commenting on it.

My friend Hari (Kondabolu) put out this documentary about the Apu character on *The Simpsons*. I've always hated that show, so I don't really care, but I do care about representation. And he's asking a lot of questions in the film. It's called *The Problem with Apu*. Recently, Matt Groening, who is the—I was going to say conductor on *The Simpsons* train.

Ever: [Makes train horn noises.]

Kathleen: He finally responded to the documentary and said—I just read this this morning. It's so disgusting—that "A lot of people pretend to be offended by things."

Ever: Ewww.

Kathleen: I was just like, "Wow, nail in your coffin."

Ever: "Now I really hate you." It's kind of like, "You like having me say whatever I say to you when you're walking down the street because of what you're wearing."

Kathleen: Yeah. And then when you go home and you tell your friend, girlfriend, whoever, "Oh, my god. This fucking dude harassed me and I wish I would have said X, Y, and Z and I didn't," and you go through your thing. Imagine, "Well, you could choose to just not be offended." Fuck you, seriously. "Ever, stop with the charade. I know you're just pretending to be offended." What is anybody going to get out of that, pretending to be offended?

That's just something only somebody with an extreme amount of privilege could even think was a real thing. Because I guess straight white guys who are contrarians—you know those guys who are like—I don't know if you're old enough to remember Andy Rooney on *60 Minutes*, but he's always like [in Andy Rooney voice] "Why is there fans?" "How come at the Razorcake studio, they have a Dodgers picture of Vin Scully? What's the reason for that?" Oh my god, who cares? "Why do people have coffee mugs that are too small for coffee?" To me, that's pretending to be offended.

Todd: The curmudgeon.

Kathleen: But it's stating the obvious that that character in that TV show is hella problematic is in no way, shape, or form fake. Sorry, I just went off on a tangent. I get so fucking mad.

Todd: I'm thinking of simple things, like access. I'm not really good with popular culture, but name ten Asian actors that are getting like-billing or paid as much as white male actors.

Kathleen: Wait, is this a test?

Todd: No.

Ever: I'm like, Jet Li! [laughter]

Todd: Fair enough. Women actors versus men actors; how much they're getting paid for co-staring roles. That's why I like having this discussion because these things are—at a large level—not being solved, but hopefully, because they're so fucking insane right now and more people can see the disparity, I think the prism's changed a little bit. Hopefully. If you don't accept diversity, you're kind of digging your own grave.

Kathleen: One, I'm glad we're living in a culture where it feels like that now. Because before, you would see that kind of comment and be like, "Par for the course." And it still is par for the course. I'm not acting like we're living in a post-racist society by any means. I just feel like now—just on Twitter, I'm reading so many more comments that are like, "Fuck you, Matt Groening" than I would have read a few years ago.

There are all these people attacking Hari—not even for his film, because they didn't even watch it—and they're all commenting. Work by women of color, by white women, by men of color, by trans people, by LGBTQ people. So many times, they don't even listen to the record to criticize it. I can't even tell you how many times I've had my work completely trashed—"She's bullshit" and all this stuff—and they spell my name wrong during my whole trashing.

Ever: "That's not even my name."

Kathleen: "Well, this Kathleen Hannah with an 'h' person sounds like a real bitch! Thank god this review's not about me." But if you can't even take the time to Wikipedia my name….
Ever: Does that go for the critics who have things to say about how you're performing now as opposed to thirty years ago as well?
Kathleen: No.
Ever: I still think you bring it.
Kathleen: I was really sick during some of the early The Julie Ruin stuff so I wasn't bringing it. I was just trying to bring. The "it" was still going to happen later. But I got up and I did it anyway. And I was like, "You know what? In Bikini Kill, it was one hundred and ten percent every single second, every single minute, feeling every single lyric." In my forties with a chronic illness, I was like, "I don't have to feel every lyric. I can get up and do my best technical singing, enjoy the music, and have a good time." And that's enough for right now. If I was to get on stage now that I'm better, I think it would be a different thing.

I don't mind critics saying they don't like my singing or they don't like my lyrics. I don't mind that at all. I think that you can tell when somebody didn't even listen to your record—who's never even listened to your music at all—and then they write some scathing criticism that has to do with what you look like or your age. It's really important to realize when it's real criticism and when it's not. When it's real criticism about playing Michigan—because there was a festival (Michigan Womyn's Music Festival) that Le Tigre played that had a "womyn-born-womyn" policy that was controversial, rightfully so. And I don't mind being critiqued on that. These are all valid things we need to talk about. I just don't like being dismissed based on my gender or my age.
Ever: Exactly.
Todd: Can we talk about Lyme disease just a little?
Kathleen: Love it.
Ever: What got you up every morning to continue?
Kathleen: My husband. I wouldn't be alive without him. I was just like, "Let's just end this. This is not worth it." This illness is so pervasive, you guys. It's so unexplainably awful. A lot of people kill themselves. We lost Leslie Feinberg, a very important theorist in our community to Lyme disease. Many people have died from it and many people die from complications—it doesn't get written down as being Lyme disease—but it is. I don't know what to say about it besides that it sucks, it's under-recognized. People don't know how to treat it.

Just like with everything, if you're anything but a moneyed straight white guy, a lot of your concerns are probably going to get thrown in the trash for a real long time before you get diagnosed. And that's one of the reasons that when Sini Anderson approached me to make a movie—and I was sick—about my life and my work, I did it because I had seen this girl named Heather on YouTube who filmed herself having a Lyme seizure, which is different. It's a hypothalamic seizure. It's different than an epileptic seizure. This was before I knew what I had. I was looking through all of these videos and Lyme disease was one of the illnesses that my doctor had written down that I could potentially have. But I tested negative. So then I went on to the other ones, which were multiple sclerosis, Crohn's, all these other things. Heather put herself out there. I knew I had Lyme disease at that moment when I saw her, because that's what was happening to me. Exactly.
Todd: Wow.

THE JULIE RUIN | CHRIS SIKICH

Kathleen: Then she had all these videos talking about her treatment. I was like, "I'm going to get retested." I did and I had it. Because she did that, I felt that was a big reason why I let myself be filmed for the movie. Because I was like, "Somebody's going to see this. They're going to see my symptoms and they're going to go, 'Hey, that might be me.'" The sooner people get diagnosed, the better.
Todd: With that, I also read that you got married partially for the health coverage.
Ever: It happens.

COURTESY OF DAVID ENSMINGER

Todd: Again, I'm thinking in a class structure; there are practical things you have to do. "Yes, I love you. I don't really believe in the state involvement in marriage, but if I do this, now I have somewhat more affordable healthcare."

Kathleen: Well, if you married somebody from the Beastie Boys, you definitely have healthcare. C'mon. I married a rich guy. Let's not pussyfoot around it. [laughter] I've got the best health insurance money can buy. Actually, I have the same shitty health insurance everyone through SAG (Screen Actors Guild) has.

Todd: Because we're talking about access to feminism—if you have to work full time. If you are sidelined by anything, then your voice is diminished because you're not at the table. I think that's with a lot of any participatory activities... But there was a good side to the disease. Here's a quote: "I think if I'd never gotten sick, I wouldn't have known or taken in how much love for me there is in this world," which I though was really powerful.

Ever: It's true.

Kathleen: It's just like with sexual abuse. It's like, yeah, you learn stuff. You get skills. I know how to disappear. I know how to go numb. I know how to stare at the wall and pretend something else is happening. I can and have used those skills in my life when I was a dancer. I try not to use it in my bands because that's my time to be fully present onstage and not to have to disappear—and that's been a big part of my art. For me, it's finding a space where I can actually be present after growing up in situations where I wasn't able to be present because it was not safe to have feelings.

You learn stuff from these bad situations that you can use in your life and maybe it's true that if you have shitty things happen to you, like abuse, Lyme disease; maybe there's a part of it that the flowers are that much prettier. I still don't wish any of it happened, but I can admit that there are side effects to it, realizing how much people love me. That was a good thing for me in learning that I have to stop being a workaholic. Spending time with my friends feeds me and it doesn't take away from what I do in the world. It gives to what I do in the world. That was huge.

That shit you were talking about earlier about being an icon and having the weight on your shoulders—I'm very lucky that I can give lectures and make money. I'm very lucky that when I have an album to promote, there are places that will actually want to talk to me about it and put it on their website or put it in their magazine. That's free advertising. That's stuff I don't have to pay for out of my pocket. I feel really fortunate and I've tried to look at the good aspects of that. The whole weight of it doesn't make any sense to me because that's just not how I view myself. I don't view myself as a third wave icon or the head president of riot grrrl or any of that stuff. I joke about it, but, at the time, when you're in your twenties and dealing with a lot of sexual abuse stuff, it's really hard to have people be like, "You're such a strong person."

I was raped while I was in Bikini Kill by a friend. I didn't even tell my band for years. I finally, eventually, had to because the guy was around. That was when it was weird.

I went to a show during that time period where there was an all-female band playing and there was some girl who was criticizing them because they didn't call themselves feminists. I mean, who cares? [laughter] I'm just happy there's a fucking girl band in town, okay? I didn't even go to the show. I'd seen this band twenty-five million fucking times. I went there to bum a cigarette.

I'm going to fully lay this out here. Frankincense and myrrh!? [laughter] All I wanted was a cigarette because I was depressed. I knew there'd be smokers hanging outside the show, so I walked over and I asked someone for a cigarette. This was before they were twenty-eight dollars apiece. Someone loaned me a cigarette and I'm smoking a cigarette, and the guy who ran the venue came out to me and said, "You need to do something." And I'm like, "I need to do something?" I'm freaking out about being molested by my uncle and my neighbor... "Who am I really? Am I just a body with tits on it? What am I? Am I person? People think I'm a feminist but I feel so gross." This dude's like, "You gotta go in there and deal with this." As if I knew. As if I had a walkie-talkie.

Ever: You're a superhero. You didn't know that? Where's your cape?

Kathleen: I was in my apartment and I was like, "Oh, something feminist is going down! Frankincense and myrrh!" So, I didn't even know and then it was explained to me. I was

Well, if you married somebody from the Beastie Boys, YOU DEFINITELY HAVE HEALTHCARE. C'mon. I married a rich guy. Let's not PUSSYFOOT around it. (laughter)

like, "Why? Why me? You own the venue, if you have a problem with it. Why can't these women work it out themselves?" I'm not Judge Judy of riot grrrl. I'm supposed to go in there and be like, "Now, you are wrong. *This* is what sisterhood is." It's like, good, they were arguing. What better show to be at than a girl band having an argument with somebody who thinks they're more feminist-than-thou in the audience. I think the person was making a fool out of themselves, personally. You wouldn't do that to a guy band. You're not going to stop Matchbox Twenty or what the shit and go, "Rob Thomas, why don't you call yourself a feminist? Why aren't you more intersectional?" So I thought the whole thing was ridiculous, but I was like, "You go in and deal with it."

Ever: You're like, "I've done that already."

Kathleen: Also, I'm not... actually, I'd rather be the honorable Judge Milian than be Judge Judy—but I'm not the honorable Judge Milian, so please do not ask me to get me involved with this. It was so weird. In situations like that, where it was basically being treated like an icon was more this sexist thing, like, "Oh, don't all you feminists have some sort of hard line to each other?" Like we have a beehive mentality. [Makes Morse code sounds] De-deet-de-deet, de-deet. I don't know.

Ever: Get me the invisible helicopter.

Kathleen: Yes. Seriously. We can still see you, Wonder Woman. Now I'm Andy Rooney. "Wonder Woman, why are riding around in that invisible helicopter? We can... still... see... you." [laughter] Sorry. Are you guys just laughing to be nice?

Ever and Todd: No.

Kathleen: Because you're laughing a lot and I'm like, "What am I doing?"

Todd: You're saying funny stuff. You're also talking about serious stuff in a very amusing way, in all honesty.

Kathleen: Good. Thanks.

Todd: We can be quiet.

Kathleen: I don't mean to go off book so much, but I don't want to have a boring interview.

Ever: Not even. We're having fun.... Personally, when do you know as a creative that it's time to move forward from a project or prioritize other projects? And, then, are you a person who is thinking of many projects at one time, or one at a time?

Kathleen: The second part, the latter. I love saying that. "That would be the latter." I always work on many projects at once because when I'm bored of singing or writing lyrics, then I can work on the artwork. Or if I'm doing my own record and doing guest vocals on other people's records, when I get sick of my record, I can work on their record. And then it's also really cool 'cause then you end up having all these projects happen at once. When I was younger, I'd hide in my apartment and nobody would know what I was doing and then all of a sudden, "And here's my new fanzine. Here's my new record. I also did a fashion show."

THE JULIE RUIN | TRICIA RAMOS

Ever: Putting in work.
Kathleen: I kind of know when something's run its fruition when if it's not cohesive and fun. That's just the collaborative nature of being in a band. One of the most important things I've learned about being someone who makes stuff is that you can always turn the ship around. If a song or an album, a piece of writing, no matter how much time and energy and hair pulling I've spent on it, you've gotta take some time and space to walk away and come back and view it with fresh eyes. And then you know if it's good or if it sucks. And if it sucks, it's better—no matter if you just spent three fucking months on it—you just throw it in the trash. You can start over or do something different totally different. It's never too late to turn the ship around. That's when I make bad work. When I get attached in a very immature way to something that I made that isn't very good and I keep hounding it and pounding it and trying to make it into something that's going to work and it was a doodle. It was scratch thing.
Todd: I think that's an important thing for developing artists: you become your own editor. You have to disassociate a little bit. Time away from it is a good thing.
Kathleen: That's where sexual abuse comes in. I'm good at disassociating. I can put on the hat of some completely other person and look at my work like I wasn't even there.
Ever: Somewhere within the time between Bikini Kill and Le Tigre, you did Julie Ruin. Some say before Le Tigre and some say after.
Kathleen: I wrote the *Julie Ruin* record while I was still in Bikini Kill. We broke up after I made it.
Ever: I love that album so much.
Kathleen: Oh, thank you. It's my mom's favorite, too.
Ever: How did that come about? Do you ever have projects that you trash at all? It doesn't seem like it.
Kathleen: Yeah, I've trashed projects. You won't be hearing my country record anytime soon. The *Julie Ruin* record came about because I was in this weird position. I was in a punk band before Bikini Kill—it was more of a heavy metal band—called Viva Knievel—where we went on the road and I thought everybody was going to be like, "Oh, this is so awesome. You're singing about rape and sexual abuse and oppression and stuff like that," and I thought everyone was going to be like, "Yay! We've been waiting for this!" and it was like, "No. You guys are ridiculous. You're a fake band. You're not real. You can't sing."

And then in Bikini Kill, it was more of the same. "No, people are ready for this now." The people who were ready for it were the three girls who were holding hands, fucking crying. They kept us going. But the rest of it, where it was women being mad at us for this, that, and the other. Guys in fanzines talking about my ass. I mean, I know I have a nice ass. I don't need you to tell me.
Ever: Duh.
Kathleen: But it was just going on and on and on about my fucking ass or about my boobs or my hair or my whatever. In punk fanzines. And I was like, "Alternative to what?" This is just the dominant culture in a different outfit, slumming it. Fuck you guys. So the Julie Ruin was kind of like all of that stuff—terrible soundmen telling me they were going to shock me on the mic when I was singing, being physically threatened at shows constantly. And then being like, "You think you're the leader of everything? You get too much attention."

All that stuff was drowning out the real conversations that we were supposed to be having, which was about white women running riot grrrl, and to a certain extent that something that was so falling apart all of the time could even be a thing. But that's the conversation we should have been having. Instead, I'm just dealing with all of this stuff that isn't even productive. And I got very frustrated and I started to realize that towards the end of Bikini Kill—not only did no one in my band feel like practicing for a really long time and I wanted to practice—so I just started making the Julie Ruin record as an outlet and I was interested in electronic music. Little-known fact: I suggested to Bikini Kill that

CHYNNA MONFORTE

we bring a drum machine in and start goofing around and make some electronic tracks. That did not work out. [laughter] But I would really like to hear that album, and I do kinda hear it in my head.

I realized I started trying to—being the lead singer of the band—people would come to me and ask me stuff and I would say stuff and it wasn't reflective—me and Tobi (Vail), theoretically, are so different—and I would be speaking for the whole band. So I started watering down everything I said and it became very boring because I was trying to say the right thing that would make everybody happy. I was like, "This isn't me. This isn't who I am." It was just people pleasing. I didn't want to step on anyone's toes to the extent of I wasn't putting my voice out there anymore. I was just saying what I thought was the right thing to say and that's no way to live your life. The *Julie Ruin* record, the solo record, was really an assertion of me as a person, as an individual. "I'm just a person making music."

Ever: That's how it came across to me. I love that.

Todd: That record's beautiful.

Kathleen: No one liked it at the time.

Ever: I liked it at the time.

Kathleen: You liked it at the time. You were like the one person who bought a copy. Now, everyone's, "That record's so great." And I'm like, "Where were you?" My label was like, "Okay, we sold forty copies."

Ever: I was waiting for the tour.

Todd: Where did the name come from?

Kathleen: 'Cause there's this song [sings] "My name's not Lisa. My name is Julie. Julie left you years ago." It was a novelty song in the '70s. I always liked the name Julie. I sort of pictured her as being Clint Ruin's (J. G. Thirlwell) annoying cousin. Clint Ruin worked with Lydia Lunch. But I was like, "Yeah, I'm Clint Ruin's annoying cousin trying to break into the industry." This is how I think I'm going to do it, is with this record. "I'm going to say Julie Ruin, because I'm associated with him and people will buy it." I had a bunch of bullshit in my head that I was making up.

Todd: Well, I think with all the years that have passed, that record stands. It seems even stronger now.

Ever: I think so, too.

Todd: If it came out again on vinyl, a lot of people would buy it. Just saying.

Ever: I was waiting.

Kathleen: Ask all the people who were sampled without their permission if they'd like that to happen. [laughter]

Todd: Point taken.

Kathleen: I'd rather keep my health insurance coverage. Trying not to talk about that record too much.

Ever: You're like, "That never happened."

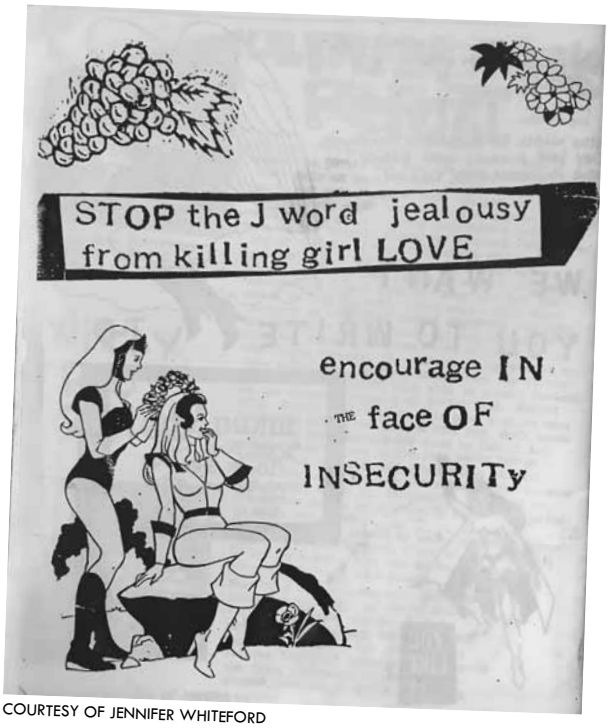
Kathleen: It's the most obvious samples in the world. That was part of the thing. I was so mad. "I'm just going to take this song over!" Because it was a whole thing of major labels stealing from people in the underground and then I was like, "Well, I'm just going to steal back. I'm just going to take these major label records back."

Ever: With Le Tigre, how did you all come together as individuals, musically, with your message and your art concepts? And then there were dance moves, as well.

Kathleen: Frankincense and myrrh! I had become friends with Johanna 'cause she came to a Bikini Kill show and gave me a fanzine called *SNARLA in Love* that she did with Miranda July, who was her best friend at the time before I stole her.

Ever: Boo-ya!

Kathleen: Poached! [laughter] I wasn't that happy in Olympia at the time and I needed to get away. She lived in Portland, Ore., which is where I was born. I basically just drove there and she'd mentioned this place called Motor Moca in her zine. It was a drive-thru coffee place that her friend Shandy, I think—or Handy or Candy or Pandy or Mandy—one of those—and I went into the Motor Moca because you could actually go in and drive-thru, both things. I just looked for whoever was the weirdest looking person there. And I said, "Do you know this person who made this fanzine?" She said, "Oh yeah, that's my friend Jo. She works at this thrift store downtown." It was a wig store and a thrift store. I went down there and pretended I didn't know who she was.



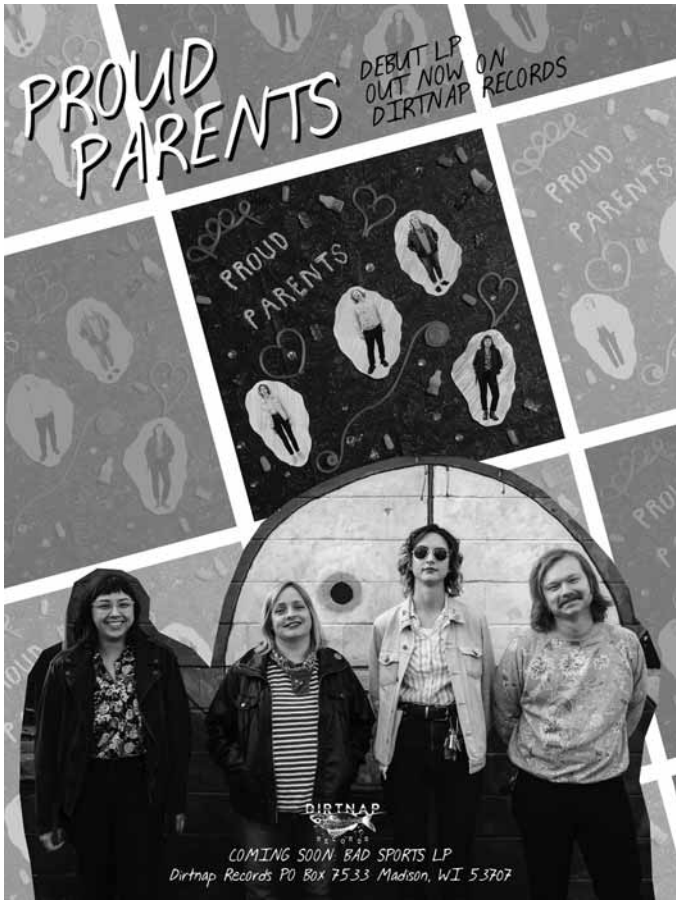
COURTESY OF JENNIFER WHITEFORD

Ever: Why?

Kathleen: Because I was basically stalking Johanna Fateman because I was in love with her. "This fanzine's the best thing I've read out of the two hundred fanzines I've gotten over the past six or seven years." I was like, this girl's a genius. I want to be best friends with her. I didn't have any friends. I was actually a total loser. I just worked all the time. My band, our relationships were very strained after many years. I needed a friend and I was going to pick the *best*. So I picked her and I asked her—I wasn't even living in Portland—"Yeah, I need a place to stay in Portland." And she was like, "Oh, a room's coming available in my house in two months." I'm like, "Okay, in two months, I'm going to move to Portland, move in with this girl, become her best friend, start a band with her."

Ever: That's kind of *Single White Female* a little bit.

I didn't want to STEP ON ANYONE'S TOES to the extent of I wasn't putting my voice out there anymore. I WAS JUST SAYING WHAT I THOUGHT WAS THE RIGHT THING TO SAY and that's no way to live your life.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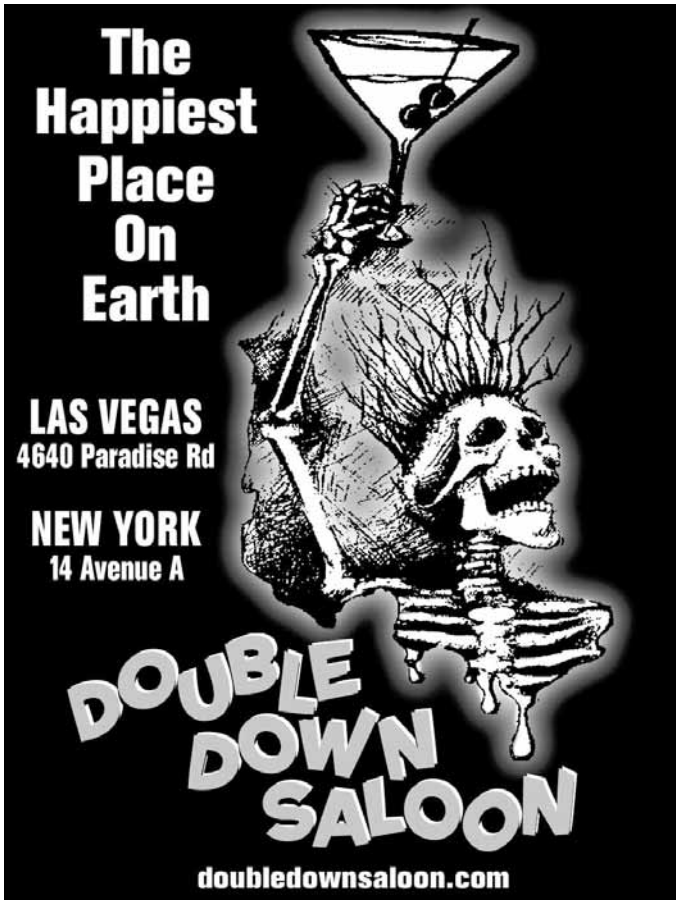

Screaming Females
"All At Once"

Don Giovanni Records

BIKINI KILL | ERIC NAKAMURA

I saw myself as a PERFORMANCE ARTIST, not a singer. I thought of myself much more as PLAYING THE ROLE OF A WOMAN IN A BAND, which actually freed me up to CALL PEOPLE OUT ON SHIT and BE CONFRONTATIONAL.

Kathleen: It was very.
Todd: Did you know she played music?
Kathleen: I didn't care. I didn't even know I was going to start a band with her. I wanted to be around her. Then she turned out to be this amazing painter. She cut hair. I was more and more blown away with her the more I knew her. We did start a band called The Troublemakers together. We played a couple shows. I just loved her and she gave me a free wig. I put on a wig and she said, [in a whisper] "Put it your purse. I won't say anything."
Ever: You're like, "Cool."
Kathleen: I don't think it was 'til a little bit into our relationship that she found I'd gone to Shandy at Motor Moca and been like, "Where's Jo?" So I tracked her down, then we became friends, then she moved to New York first. I hooked up with some friends there. Now she owns a hair salon with one of the guys who I hooked her up with. I was all, "Call Shaun (SureThing). He lives in New York." They run a business together now. I moved there and it was a no-brainer—I'd always wanted to perform the Julie Ruin stuff live and so I was like, "Will you do it with me?"

And then Sadie (Benning) joined in and that didn't really work out. JD was doing our slides. She used to sing to this Nickelback song [in deep, throaty, froggy voice] "This is how you remind me of who I really am... yeah... mmm, yeah!" [laughter] So we'd be in the van and she'd be driving and she would think that nobody would be paying attention. We'd all have our iPods on or whatever and she'd be singing. I was like, "You know, she can actually sing." That Nickelback growl. Then she would do the backup part. I was already scouting her. "She'd be great. We need another backup singer in the band." So, she was already going to join the band and when Sadie left, it was just like, "Well, now you've got to learn all of Sadie's parts."
Todd: Side note. JD was in *House of Cards*?
Kathleen: Apparently so. What JD does; I feel like I'm going to see a billboard of JD in a J. Crew little boys ad at some point. And I say that with love in my heart.
Ever: That's love.
Kathleen: She looks good in a suit.
Ever: So how did the art concepts come about for Le Tigre?
Kathleen: Jo is a real visual artist and it seemed like it would be silly not to incorporate some of that into it. Also, in Bikini Kill, I started as a performance artist. I did spoken word and was really inspired by people like Karen Finley and Yoko Ono and Carolee Schneemann. Lorraine O'Grady. I could just go on and on. Performance art. The magazine *High Performance* was my bible. I read about all the feminist performance art in New York that was going on and that had gone down in the '70s and was really, really inspired. So, a lot of Bikini Kill, I saw myself as a performance artist, not a singer. I thought of myself much more as playing the role of a woman in a band, which actually freed me up to call people out on shit and be confrontational. Because when you see it as performance art, it gave me a lot bigger leeway of what I could and couldn't do as a musician. But then we really became a band and I really became a singer and I really had to hone my craft and get into it. That was great.

But then with Le Tigre, I was able to explore more of the performance art side of it. As technology was developing, we were developing. We went from a slide projector to a video projector, which costs us ten thousand dollars at the time and would probably cost five dollars now. We could have done our whole set on the iPhone. We made all these C-Clamp, crazy contraptions to hold it up in the ceiling. But, yeah, a lot of it was also we wanted it to be a gift, a big present. We didn't want to go out on stage and stare at our shoes. We wanted costumes.
Ever: It was an experience.
Kathleen: Yeah, we wanted it to be an experience. Also, part of it was in reaction to Bikini Kill. I couldn't work with another drummer after Tobi Vail. She's so good.
Todd: What I appreciate with Le Tigre is that it's dancey. I'm coming from a punk perspective; it's refreshing. "Punk can be an expanding universe. Awesome. This is exciting."
Kathleen: Well, dance music is associated with gay people, feminine people, and it was this whole thing that punk rock is supposed

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to be like, "I'm spitting in your face. Fuck you," and all this stuff. That was not at all my experience of punk rock. Punk rock was welcoming and community. I also was just sick of the violence—being in basically what amounted to a hardcore band at a certain point—I was just going to keep having guys show up, pay their five dollars, and throw beer bottles at my head.

I was like, "Hey, if I do dance music, it's going to save my voice because I'm not going to be screaming in the same way. I'm going to be actually, legitimately singing, using the techniques that I had learned from my five lessons I could afford in Olympia." There wasn't—at these shows—the violence wasn't there.

Ever: Did you feel that The Julie Ruin needed to grow into a band and how did that come about? I was at the first L.A. show for it and I was very happy to see you with Kathi (Wilcox) together again, and having the Sex Stains open with Allison Wolfe made me feel like I went back in time for a little bit.

Kathleen: I just wanted to do the Julie Ruin songs. It was the same way with Le Tigre. I just wanted to do the Julie Ruin songs and then we never did. We didn't really do that many songs off of the solo record. We did "Stay Monkey" sometimes. But then it just sort of happened. It wasn't really like, "Oh, this needs to grow and expand." It just kept kind of steamrolling.

Todd: I just have one last question.

Kathleen: It better not be about my butt.

Ever: Yeah, Todd. Behave yourself. [laughter]

Todd: It is probably the most un-butt thing I'm going to ask you.

Kathleen: I do want everyone to know I'm wearing very not-flattering yoga pants today with criss-crossies on them. And a shirt that says, "You better get your tools 'cause your game needs fixing!" [laughter] I just wanted you guys to have a visual 'cause I know it's important when you hear a female voice, that you need to know.

Ever: She's murdering it, though. She looks really good.

Todd: In 2009, your work was archived in the Fales [pronounces it "phallus"] Library....

Kathleen: In the "phallus"? [Screams in delight.] That is so good! Oh my god.

Todd: How do you say it?

Kathleen: "Fay-els."

Todd: Fair enough.

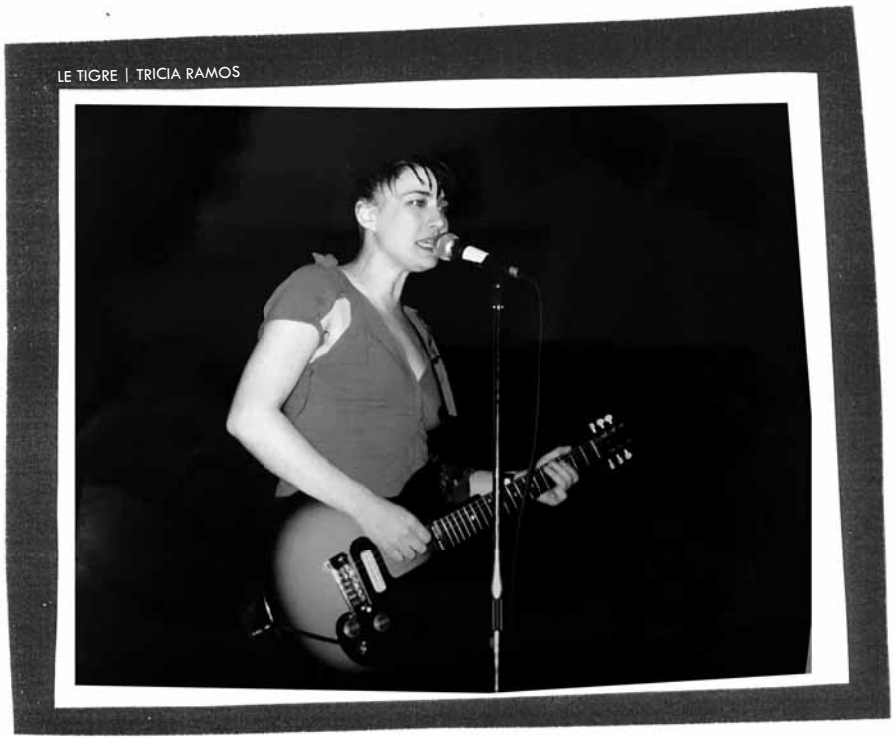
Kathleen: You guys, come on. That's a really good joke? "Did you hear about Kathleen's work? It's in the phallus archives! We've made it, ladies!"

Todd: I'm not even trying to be funny. I've just read the word. I'd never heard it pronounced.

Kathleen: At least it's not in the vagina archives, like it's a dank basement. Flooded. People are like, "It costs fifty cents to go in there. I can't believe what a sellout you are!" [laughter]

Todd: [slightly embarrassed] Okay, at New York University and you helped create the riot grrrl collection. You gave all of your archives to them.

Kathleen: I cleaned out my closet.



LE TIGRE | TRICIA RAMOS

Todd: This is my interpretation of it. It seems like you're less interested in your personal legacy and more interested in building future donations and setting foundations.

Kathleen: That's very generous.

Todd: What are your hopes for the archives?

Kathleen: Jesus. Well, my first thing is that I'm going to try to get them to rename "Fales" as "The Phallus Archives." I feel like people will take it a little more seriously. It will be a little more straightforward. As I've been told, "I come hard." "I'm cocky." You know, I just really hope—there are essays in there that I never published because I was too scared. There's embarrassing stuff in there.

Todd: That's good, though. So people see you as a person.

Kathleen: I don't care if people see me as a person. I care that they look at my work and that they're, "Here's this stuff that makes sense to me and my life and here's the stuff that doesn't." And then build off of that and then it inspires other people to be like, "Oh, I don't have to perfect." To see an artistic process. "Oh, this is where she was at when she was sixteen. This is where she was at when she donated it when she was forty-two." I hope that the whole riot grrrl archive grows.

But, honestly, I really did have this filing cabinet that I had been carrying around forever. It travelled across country when we moved to D.C., holding up the van's driver's seat, 'cause the driver's seat was broken. And if that driver's seat wouldn't have been broken, I would have thrown everything in that cabinet out and gotten rid of it. We were only allowed to bring a suitcase each when we moved, 'cause we couldn't fit stuff besides equipment in the van. Luckily, the seat broke and the only way to hold it up was to put the filing cabinet there and that held the seat up for the tour. My archive was literally travelling around.

I should have let people in there—I mean, nobody cared then—and I really wanted to get rid of it. I was like, "The next stage of my life can't happen until I wrap this up." And, logically, we were all turning forty when me and a bunch of my friends—Allison Sex Stains, Bratmobile—and throwing stuff out, having small apartments. I just didn't want to see a bunch of stuff that people had made, like the original fanzines, be gone forever. We made them to be ephemeral for our scene at a certain time and some of them became bigger than that. But there were a lot of zines made that not very many people saw that were really developmentally important to a lot of people and were xeroxed and passed around. *Bamboo Girl* was one of them and Sabrina's (Margarita Alcantara-Tan) work is represented in the riot grrrl archive book that Fales put out. I don't want that stuff to be lost. I believe in a continuum. I believe we put work out there and then it continues to have its own life and it isn't ours anymore... and I really wanted more closet space.

Todd: It's a win-win.

Kathleen: I'm saying all this shit, but in reality I wanted more closet space and I don't think there's anything wrong with that. I went to a thing about the idea of archiving punk—like, what does that mean? 'Cause I'm interested in that as a topic. I went to it at NYU and my friend who was with me ended up getting a job at NYU two weeks later, and I had said to her, "Man, if Richard Hell can have his stuff here, why can't I get rid of that stupid filing cabinet?"

Ever: Bing! It's in the Phallus.

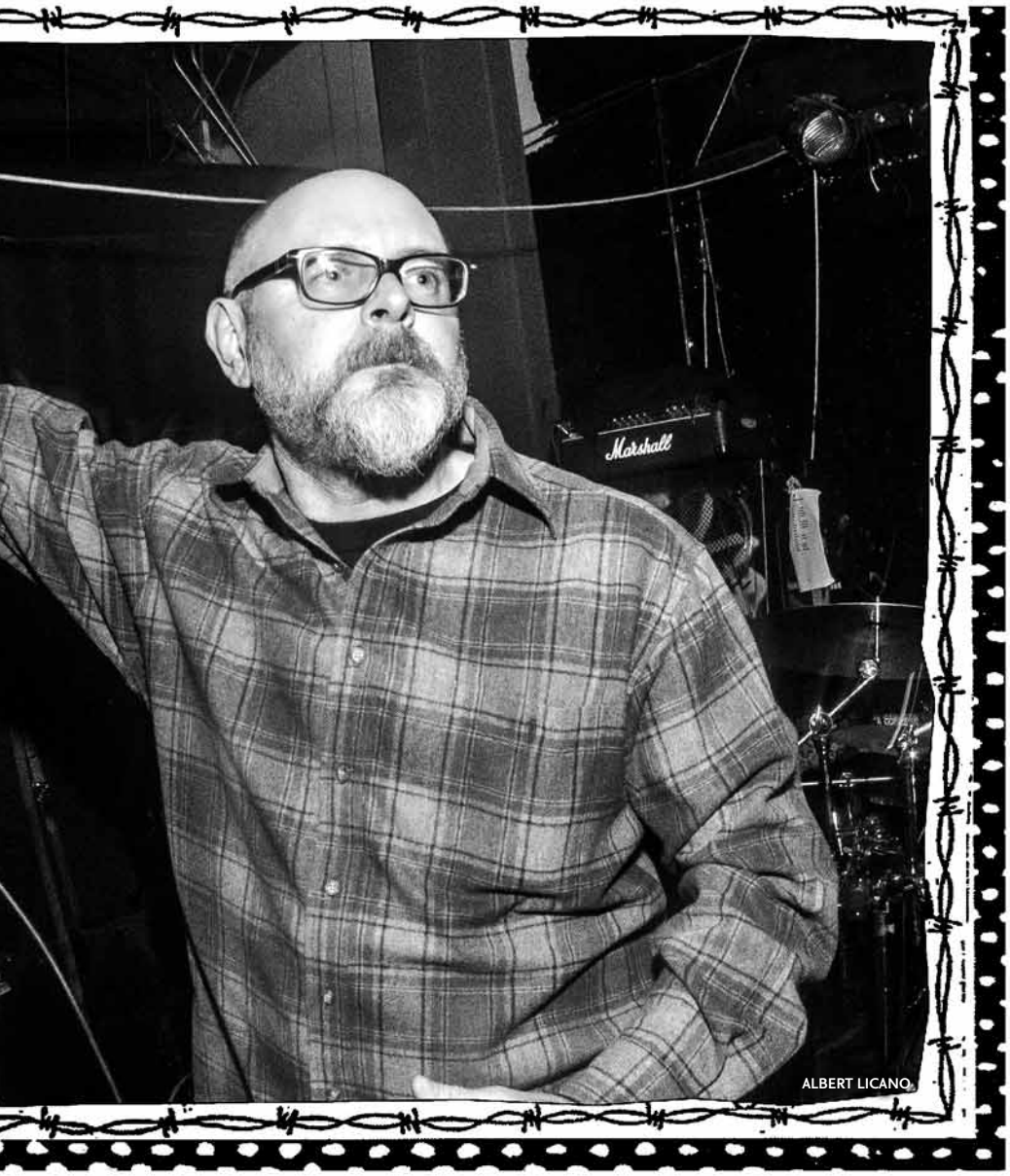
CHRIS DODGE

Chances are you're familiar with the name Chris Dodge if you're at all into powerviolence, hardcore, punk, or thrash. After all, he only founded Slap A Ham Records, the premier powerviolence and hardcore punk record label of the '90s. The label released works from movers and shakers such as Man Is The Bastard, Crossed Out, Capitalist Casualties, and Spazz, in which he played bass and sang. Chris has also been invited to play with several of his own favorite hardcore bands including Despise You, Lack Of Interest, and Infest.

The self-described "cave dweller" currently fronts the band To The Point, is co-founder of beer snobs Trappist, and collaborated with Olav and Paul Van Den Berg of Seein' Red/Lärm fame. We lured Chris out of his cave and into our podcast station with the promise of beer (which we fully delivered) to discuss his past achievements and current obsessions.

I SWEAR TO GOD I THINK WE WROTE OVER TWO HUNDRED SONGS.

THERE'S SO MANY GODDAMN RELEASES. AT A CERTAIN POINT YOUR LYRICS AREN'T GOING TO BE CREAM OF THE CROP.



ALBERT LICANO

Interview by Juan Espinosa and Todd Taylor
Introduction by Juan Espinosa
Photos by Matt Average and Albert Licano
Layout by Eric Baskauskas

Juan: Right off the bat, I get a lot of funny looks from my Slap A Ham T-shirt because no one really knows what that means. Where exactly did you get the name Slap A Ham?
Chris: The name came from my friend Walter Glaser who used to do record reviews, tape reviews for *Maximum Rock'n'roll* back in the mid-'80s. We started hanging out around '86, '87. We were all part of the early Gilman (924 Gilman St. Club in Berkeley, Calif.) thing—a whole group of people who would go pretty much every weekend just to see every show and hang out, goof off, and have fun. He always came up with all sorts of goofy sayings. He'd just walk up to people and just say random things. "Toss your salad!" "Slap your ham!" It was just weird euphemisms for masturbation. [laughs]

Around the same time I'd been wanting to start a record label. I wanted to do it for a few years but just didn't really know where to start, what to do.
Todd: Or what to call it.
Chris: Yeah, exactly. Around '88 or so, Lookout Records was putting out the compilation *The Thing that Ate Floyd*, the double album. David Hayes was putting together a booklet that came with it. Each band had a half-page layout and he also had ads for friends who had businesses—labels, zines, or whatever. And he said, "Hey, if you want to send me an ad I'll put it in this insert that's going into the compilation." He knew I had been planning on starting a label.
Todd: Forcing you…
Chris: Yeah! He said "If you wanna put this ad in there, you need to give it to me right away!" I forgot it was a couple days before it was due and I sort of panicked. "I'm not ready! I'm planning on doing it, but I'm not really doing it!" And I had no idea what to call it, so out of thin air: "Okay. Slap A Ham. There you go." Just something ridiculous because I was thinking it'd be really funny. One day I can have the most brutal bands in the world want to be on a label called Slap A Ham. I just thought that'd be the funniest thing.
Juan: Obviously, the label accomplished quite a few feats in solidifying the first wave of powerviolence—or even "West Coast" powerviolence—and, yet, I feel like the records were pressed in relatively large numbers.
Chris: I dunno. If you think one to two thousand is large [laughs], then the answer is yes.
Todd: If you pressed and *sold* that many.
Chris: Most of the pressings were basically one-thousand, fifteen-hundred, two-thousand

TODD: DO YOU KNOW WHERE THE TERM "POWERVIOLENCE" CAME FROM?

CHRIS: THE TERM IS OFFICIALLY ATTRIBUTED TO MATT DOMINO, THE DRUMMER AND GUITARIST IN NEANDERTHAL AND THE GUITARIST IN INFEST.

at the most. In the mid-'90s there were a couple of records that maybe went to three thousand, but almost all of them were super small pressings. At the very beginning, especially, it was pressings of one to two thousand copies and it usually took a year or two to get through those. They all sold fairly slow. I wasn't necessarily interested in, "Oh, I've got to sell these as quickly as possible." The only reason I'd want them to sell quickly is so I can get money back so I can put out the next thing. I was trying to build up some sort of catalog so it wasn't just a release by release thing, because that's how everything starts out. You're building a catalog so it's nice to be able to put out an ad that maybe has five things instead of one thing for sale.

It was all pretty slow. People think that it was a big demand or even a big rush for these releases, but it really wasn't. I mean, it started building its core of followers and people who were into it and started to associate the label name with certain bands and sounds they liked. When I was doing mailorder, you'd see all the same names come up with every release. "Okay, this guy's gonna order."

Juan: Was there any release that you felt took a particularly long time to move through? I'm thinking of maybe the first fifteen or so catalog numbers.

Chris: The first Fu Manchu record. I did a thousand copies of those and it took forever to sell those. [laughs] Nobody wanted that one. There are so many things like that you can laugh at in retrospect. At the time people were, "What the fuck is this? It's not Spazz. Who cares?"

Todd: "It's not what I was looking for."

Chris: Yeah. That's the funny thing when you look at the first few releases that came out. It kind of ping-ponged between, "Okay, you've got Infest and PHC (Pissed Happy Children, pre-Man Is The Bastard), and then you got the Melvins. And then No Use For A Name. And then Neanderthal. And Stikky. Capitalist Casualties. But then you got Fu Manchu." At that point, it could've gone in any direction that every other label went in: Estrus, Sub Pop, whatever. "I'm following the Melvins, Fu Manchu path into stoner/drone rock/Nirvana sort of territory." Instead, I've always been a fast hardcore guy. I liked everything, which is the reason I put out stuff that I liked. And eventually I just focused on: "Okay, these are the bands that nobody's interested in helping out. This is music I like, I'm just going to keep putting these out." It wasn't a conscious decision; it just eventually steered that way.

Todd: This may be a dumb question: do you know where the term and the effect of "powerviolence" came from?

Chris: The term is officially attributed to Matt Domino, the drummer and guitarist in Neanderthal and the guitarist in Infest. He and Eric Wood (PHC, Neanderthal, Man Is The Bastard) started the whole project, Neanderthal, and they used it to describe their band and their sound. That was just a quick project they did and then Eric continued with Man Is The Bastard and all that. The term carried on with that and then it evolved into a circle of friends of all the bands who had this camaraderie, a common interest in aggressive music at a time when everyone was interested in pop punk and hardcore wasn't cool anymore.

Todd: You're running parallel tracks to Lookout (Records).

Chris: It wasn't cool to be into hardcore. None of the clubs wanted to book hardcore bands. That's why I think it thrived as a little sub scene. It's just a group of friends: "No! We still like hardcore. We still like aggressive music."

Juan: Obviously, music has been a lot easier to record, mix, and press within the last fifteen years or so. Slap A Ham put out one of the best compilation series if not, in my opinion, the best compilation series of all time in *Blllleeeeaaauurrrrgghhh*. How was it putting together a compilation with first forty-one bands, then fifty two, and finally seventy three bands on one 7"?

Chris: It got progressively easier because towards the end people really wanted to do it.

Todd: Just the logistics though…

Chris: Yeah, it's true. It's funny, I'm looking at your shirt (Todd's shirt), at this *We Got Power* shirt. And what really inspired the first *Blllleeeeaaauurrrrgghhh* comp was the *We Got Power: Party or Go Home* (compilation).

Todd: No shit!

Chris: Because that was always one of my favorites and of course at the time in the early to mid-'80s: "Whoaaaa! This is crazy! There's forty bands on an LP? That's insane! I can't believe it! And they all do one-minute songs? Oh my god!" That was one of my favorite releases. I'm a goofball and I'm always thinking of some sort of angle for something. At the time in the late '80s, it was all the noise-core sort of stuff was coming out: Sore Throat, Seven Minutes Of Nausea, and Meat Shits. [laughs]

Chris: And all these bands… A.C.

Todd: You can say the name, it's all right.

Chris: Anal Cunt.

Todd: Just for people who don't know.…

Chris: Yeah, just don't confuse them with someone else.

Todd: Air conditioning.…

Chris: With Alice Cooper. [laughs] They're putting out these releases with eighty-eight songs and whatever. Just these little blasts. At the time, I was writing reviews for *Maximum Rock'n'roll*. I was the guy who got all of the high speed releases, all the noise-core and grindcore. As years start to go by, there are more and more of these bands who are putting out these releases with one hundred songs on them. It'd be funny to try and get as many of those as possible, because since the beginning of hardcore-dom there have been compilations that have some sort of theme. So I was thinking it'd be funny to get as many of these bands as possible on one record. And using the *We Got Power* example, what if it's a 7" and do more than forty bands! I'm going to see how many I can do!" So I made this form letter and sent it out to every band I could think of at the time and just said, "Send me a fifteen-second song." My thought was "Okay, I'm gonna do a 7". If I get too many, I'll take it from there."

Todd: A double 7".

Chris: Sure enough, it all worked out. I think the first release (*Blllleeeeaaauurrrrgghhh* The Record), I got maybe one or two DATs (Digital Audio Tape), but it was most-

MATT AVERAGE

ALBERT LICANO

MATT AVERAGE

ly cassettes, so I had to go somewhere and transfer the cassettes. We transferred them all to a ¼ inch reel, because then you could actually physically mark the spot with a wax pencil or whatever, take it out, cut it close together, and then we spliced them. That's how we got everything close.

Juan: What are some of the wackier or more creative ways that people have paid tribute to Slap A Ham?

Chris: A lot of people have tattoos.

Juan: The little dog?

Chris: Yeah, a lot of people have that. There's a tribute album that came out of Germany. It's called *A Fucking Tribute to Slap A Ham*. The weird thing is I don't think any of the bands covered any of the songs. It was just a bunch of fast bands, which is cool, but I thought they were actually going to pick some Crossed Out songs or something like that. It was still nice.

Juan: Isn't there a brewery from Japan that made a Slap A Ham beer?

Chris: Yeah, that's right! There's Thrash Zone in Yokohama. They did a beer for me. I was with Infest and we went over last year. The brewer reached out to me and offered to do a beer for me. "What style should we do?" "I don't know. I like everything that's well done: really skunky IPAs, a heavy stout, a barrel aged thing, or maybe a barley wine." He said "Okay, let's do a barley wine." And so he ended up brewing one: 13% (ABV).

Juan: Whoa… [laughs]

Chris: And he asked me what to call it and I was, "I have no idea." I studied Japanese a couple decades ago so I'm super rusty, but my vocabulary slowly comes back. Slang for "alcoholic" in Japanese is *aru-chu*. So I said "Why don't we call it the *aru-chu* barley wine or the Ham Slappin' barley wine?" And so he came up with this long thing: "Chris Dodge's Ham Slappin Aru-Chu Barley Wine Ale." [laughs] And he had some guy draw a picture of me, which looks like an R. (Robert) Crumb drawing. I don't know if you saw the label. It doesn't really look like me but they tried.

Todd: In spirit.

Chris: It's a bald white guy with glasses and a beard. Close enough. [laughs]

Juan: And so did you actually taste it while you were in Japan?

Chris: Oh, it was excellent. They had it on tap and then he did a limited bottling of a hundred bottles. I brought back twelve. I've still got a couple of them I'm sitting on. I gave some of them out to close friends.

Juan: So, Spazz made it onto the cover of *Rolling Stone* in Japan?

Chris: Well, this guy, Ken Yokoyama, The guy from Hi-Standard…

Juan: Pizza Of Death Records...

Chris: Yeah! On the cover of *Rolling Stone* (Japan), he's wearing a Spazz shirt, which is really funny.

Juan: And it's a bootleg, right?

Chris: Yeah, it's a bootleg Spazz shirt. [laughs] But it's still a Spazz shirt! Still us, so it counts! I'm okay with bootlegs. Yeah, that was kind of funny. I don't know if he remembers, but I actually met him/kinda worked with him and his band in the '90s because I worked at Fat Wreck Chords when I lived in San Francisco. Hi-Standard was on Fat. Super nice guys. Super cool.

Juan: I was actually at that last Spazz show at Gilman...

Chris: Oh yeah? Sorry. [laughs]

Juan: What do you remember from that?

Chris: I just remember I didn't like it.

Todd: Why's that?

Chris: I didn't enjoy it. There were too many people. It sounds dumb to complain: [pouting voice] "Too many people came to our last show!"

Todd: It can go two ways with that. I've had very uncomfortable situations where it's just too full. It's dangerous!

Chris: And that's what it was. I was just annoyed by that because they let in way too many people. They were just trying to accommodate everybody, which I get. But at the same time you just could not move. That was the most people I've ever seen in Gilman. They packed it shoulder to shoulder and there were people all over the stage—standing and sitting.

I was kind of pissed off because there were all these people with video cameras and they were all standing up. Because you know, Gilman, they've got the floor and then they've got a decent size stage, which is three feet high or something like that. And so you've got somebody standing on the stage in front of the band with this huge VHS video camera on their shoulder. Like, what the fuck?! There's four hundred people who can't see what's going on because all you assholes have to stand there with your cameras. That just set the whole tone for it. By the time we played, I was just annoyed, I was hot, I was uncomfortable, I was pissed off. [laughs]

Juan: Are you still on the Fat Wreck Chords payroll?

Chris: Sort of. I'm on one of the No Use For A Name albums (*Don't Miss the Train*, originally released on New Red Archives), so every six months I get a check for about twenty dollars.

Juan: Beer money!

Chris: Yeah! It's still money! I can't complain [laughs] because they're honest with their bookkeeping and they've always been that way. Kudos to them.

Todd: How long ago did you record that?

Chris: An album I recorded in '91 or something and I'm still getting some pocket change for it.

Juan: Is Stikky still on permanent hiatus?

Chris: Yeah. We almost played the Lookout thirty-year anniversary thing, but it just wasn't in the cards. Those guys live up north and I'm down here four hundred miles away. We kinda "hmm'd" and "huh'd" about it. I'd planned on going up there to Chris Wilder's (Stikky guitarist, co-vocalist, brother of Todd) house and we were gonna practice. "Let's all just figure out the songs again on our own. Let's just see how horrible it is and see if it's salvageable in any way. If it's going to be really pathetic then it's a no-go." But it just never happened because my car started pooping out on the way there. "Okay. This is a sign." [laughs]

Not like it hasn't been done. I mean, Neurosis does it. They live all over the place. But Todd (Wilder) the drummer hasn't played fast—he was the drummer and lead vocalist—and he hasn't done that for decades.

Todd: It's physically taxing.

Chris: So, yeah. We never officially broke up but it's unlikely we'll play. It may happen. And it will be sad when it does but.... [laughs]

I'M TERRIBLE AT LANDSCAPES, AT PRETTY MUCH EVERYTHING, BUT I'M GREAT AT DOG PAINTINGS.

Juan: Did you go to art school to become a painter or are you just really good at it?
Chris: No. I used to draw a lot as a kid. It came naturally. I was really into drawing and then I just abandoned that for a while. Then around 2006, when I got divorced, I had this creative renaissance. [laughs] I started taking all these classes. "Okay, yay! I'm liberated! I'm a free man!" I was seriously inspired. "I'm gonna do a bunch of stuff!" I'd always wanted to figure out how to paint, so I took these oil painting classes. Just really hooked on it.
Todd: That's awesome!
Chris: I always, for whatever reason, gravitated towards animal portraits. [laughs]
Juan: Dogs right?
Chris: Yeah! Mostly dogs! I don't know why. Because I've always wanted to. I'm terrible at landscapes, at pretty much everything, but I'm great at dog paintings. That's kind of my forte for whatever reason.
Juan: Would you say that the *Ozma* (Melvins 1989 album) album cover is probably what people would know best of your artwork?
Chris: As far as album art and stuff like that?
Juan: Right.
Chris: It's funny, I've never really pursued that as a thing. I don't know why. The *Ozma* thing just came about as a fluke. At the time, the Melvins had moved to San Francisco and I ran into them. I'd seen them a couple times playing around town. There was one night in Berkeley, I had gone over to see some other show and I was driving down the street. That show had ended and there was some other show going on that the Melvins were playing. Just because I was in the area, I stopped and they were all just standing outside. At the time, Lori Black was their bass player. I had known Lori previously because she was in the band Clown Alley. My first band from San Jose was Legion Of Doom, this teenage skate punk band. We played with Clown Alley. I thought Clown Alley was awesome.

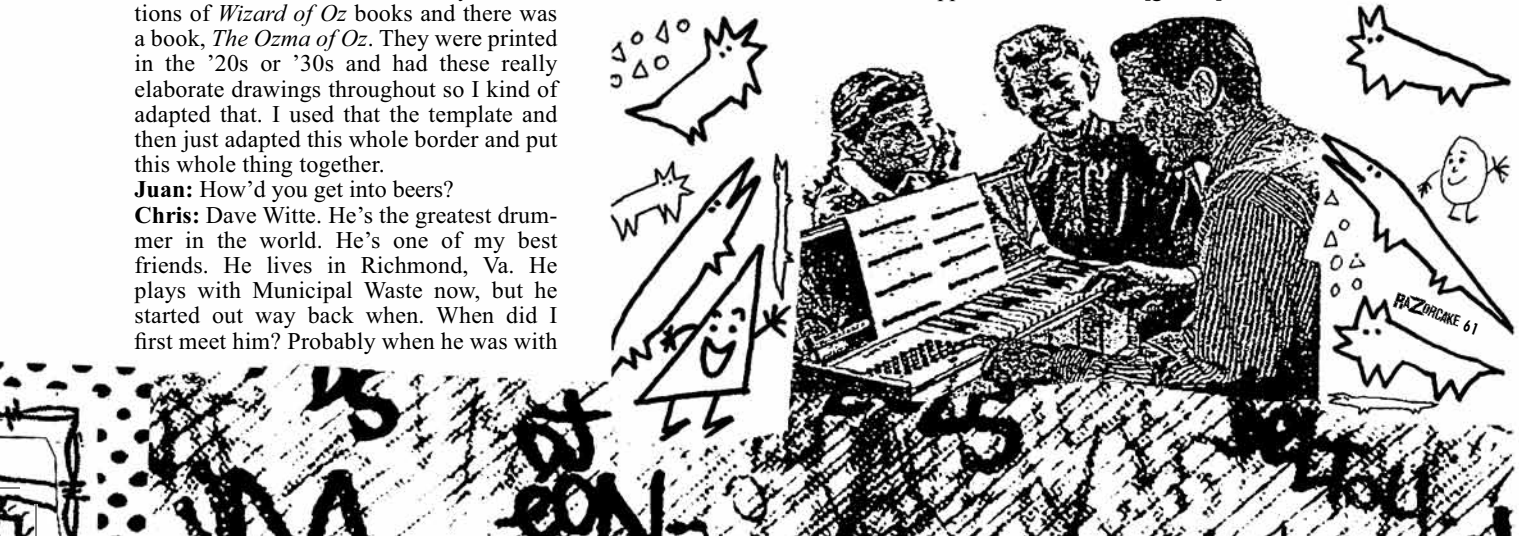
So Lori was there. We just started chit chatting, and that's how I got to buddy up with the Melvins because they were just hanging out there. All of them lived in one house out in the Richmond district in San Francisco and they didn't really know a whole lot of people in town. They started working on their album and talking about what they wanted to do for the cover and I'm like, "Oh yeah, I could try this if you want." So I sat in my kitchen and worked on this. Lori had all these really old editions of *Wizard of Oz* books and there was a book, *The Ozma of Oz*. They were printed in the '20s or '30s and had these really elaborate drawings throughout so I kind of adapted that. I used that the template and then just adapted this whole border and put this whole thing together.
Juan: How'd you get into beers?
Chris: Dave Witte. He's the greatest drummer in the world. He's one of my best friends. He lives in Richmond, Va. He plays with Municipal Waste now, but he started out way back when. When did I first meet him? Probably when he was with Discordance Axis. Then he played with Melt-Banana, Burnt By The Sun, and a million other bands. Brain Tentacles is another new one of his. He's the first guy I knew who was just a beer guy in the '90s, which wasn't a ubiquitous beer hipster time.
Juan: It was the title of his column in *Short, Fast, and Loud* fanzine right, "Beers and Bands"?
Chris: Oh, right. *Short, Fast, and Loud* is a zine I started. I reached out to a bunch of my friends to write columns and so I hit him up. His column was "Beers and Bands" and he was the first person I knew from the scene who'd write about beer. He'd just write about shows that he went, what beer he was drinking [laughs], and who he saw. He was the gateway guy for beer because I was never a beer guy—I didn't know what was "good." And like most people, you start out with stuff like...
Todd: Cheap... I was gonna ask, did you go through any straight edge periods?
Chris: Yeah, for sure. Like everybody else in your late teens or early twenties. I wasn't hardcore straight edge, but for the most part, I just kinda was because, especially in high school—my friends who drank or smoked pot, they were all so dumb! [laughs]

Pot was fun! But I wasn't like, a stoner—it wasn't my thing. "Okay, I'm bored. I'm just going to smoke weed all day." I think I was always just so busy with other things. I was so into spending my time working on stuff like writing for zines. Doing *Maximum Rock'n'roll*. Being in bands, going to shows, "Do, do, do!" being really active. When you're sitting around doing nothing, it's easy to be like, "Let's just drink beer." Like we're doing right now! "Let's just drink beer all night." And I wasn't really that person.

But when I got into my thirties, that's really when I started drinking and I found those little pathways to stuff that was really good. The first one was wine. I found some stuff that was really good, that I really enjoy and appreciate. And then from there realizing that wine was ridiculously expensive and I don't have a lot of money, I'm gonna branch off towards beer because there's a lot of awesome beer.

Unlike wine, which spoils easily and is dependent upon the year and how good the crop was that year and what the yield was. You could find a winery you really like "This 2008 is fantastic!" And then you try a 2009 and "Oh, this is horrible! What happened?" "Well the weather was different that year..." Well, this sucks! As opposed to a beer that you can replicate forever—unless there's a hop famine—you can stay with the same recipe and keep making an awesome beer for decades if you wanted to. So that's why I'm a beer nerd. That's why I'm that stereotypical middle age white hipster guy with glasses, the trucker cap, the flannel shirt, liking the fancy beer.
Juan: Is Trappist a band comprised of beer connoisseurs?
Chris: Yeah, we're nerdy about beer. That's kind of my whole angle with that. [laughs]
Todd: Because Spazz was known as a really serious band... [laughs]
Chris: Oh yeah, exactly! That's my reputation, being so serious about everything! [laughs]
Juan: Does everyone in the band appreciate really good beers?
Chris: Yeah, everybody does. You know what's funny is—because it's just a three piece—it's me, Phil Vera who is in Despise You and Crom, and then Ryan Harkins. He's from Cleveland. He was in a bunch of bands out there: Killed In Action and some others. He's the co-owner of Grill 'Em All, the metal-themed burger place.
Todd: In Alhambra.
Chris: Exactly. Funny thing is Ryan has been sober for the past two years, but he still appreciates good beer, because when we're drinking he always wants to smell it. That's what's funny.

We do a podcast, this thing called "Hour of the Barbarian," and we sit around, drink beer, and we just bullshit. Not like this, we seriously bullshit—like, we don't talk about anything—we just get drunk and laugh about everything. Phil and I go through a lot of beer but every one that we pour, we pass over to him and he smells it and he's... [makes smelling sound] "Mmmmmm!" [laughs]
Juan: You guys have a strict "no corporate beer" policy, right?
Chris: We try to adhere to that, yeah.
Todd: How tricky does that get though? Because there's buyouts all the time.
Chris: Well, yeah, but everybody knows who's who, though.
Todd: You think?
Chris: I think so, yeah. It gets known because, it's funny, you know the craft [stops mid-sentence] Ugh, I hate... I hate...
Todd: [laughs] You're going to say something!
Chris: [groans]



POTENTIALLY BLASPHEMOUS

★ "In this wildly imaginative alternative Europe, the delicately evolving relationship between kindhearted, pious, fiercely determined, and achingly lonely Lizbet ("fair-skinned, like most northern folk") and surly, bellicose, but resourceful Strix ("the brown of autumn leaves") provides a sweet counterpoint to a tale otherwise teeming with selfishness, violence, and cruelty, where even heaven fails before the legions of hell. This last plotline, played at first for mordant (and potentially blasphemous) humor, subtly coalesces all the seemingly unrelated episodes until they suddenly transmogrify into a climax that's genuinely thrilling, unexpectedly poignant, and oddly reverent." — *Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)

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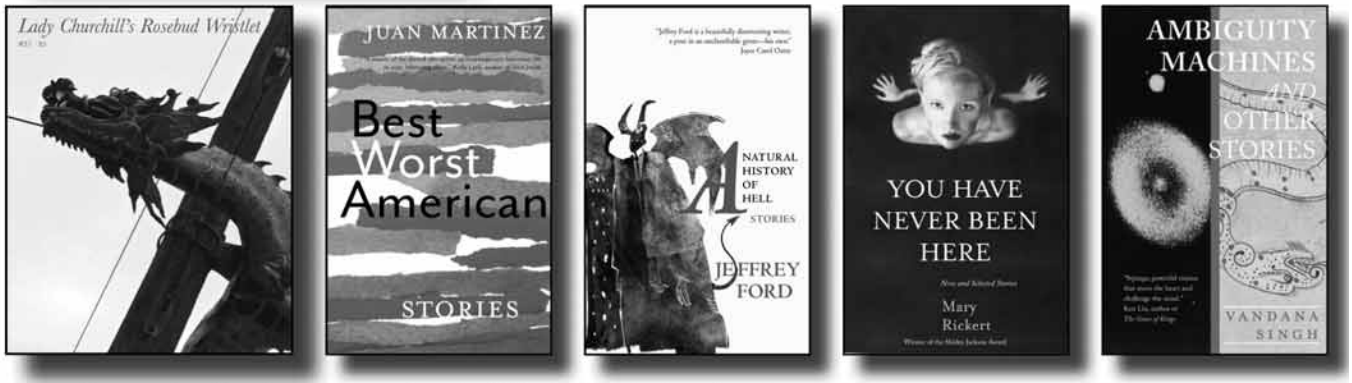
— Kelly Link, author of *Get in Trouble*



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Todd: The craft beer community! The craft beer guilds!
Chris: Grrrr! [laughs] I don't know why I said "craft" because craft, that's my nails on the chalkboard thing.
Todd: "Artisanal craft," "artisanal cocktails."
Chris: [laughs] Like those catchphrases.
Todd: "Why do you have to fuck everything up?!" It's just delicious beer!
Chris: Oh my god, no. I prefer... Indie beer. But the whole craft beer thing, it reminds me of in the '90s—there was the whole feeding frenzy for "alternative bands!"
Todd: "Extreme!"
Chris: More so alternative. "Alternative!" That was the catch phrase for "Hole! Nine Inch Nails!"
Todd: "Smashing Pumpkins!"
Chris: Everything! "Alternative music! Alternative! Alternative! Everything is alternative!"
Todd: "Stone Temple Pilots!"
Chris: Exactly! "Alternative!"
Todd: "Jeep Wrangler! Taco Bell!"
Chris: I remember listening to—there was this alternative station that was playing all the stuff. "The Cranberries and the Breeders!" It was around the time of Lollapalooza, et cetera, et cetera, and there were these radio ads for Moosehead beer. "Your alternative beer for your alternative summer!" [laughs]
Todd: Juan was asking about saying no to corporate beer. There are always weird buy-outs. But if you're tuned into it...
Chris: That's what I was starting to get at, is that the independent brew scene—not the craft beer scene—reminds me a lot of the punk scene in a way. Because a lot of the brewers, they collaborate. You think of split 7"s or split releases. There are all these beer collaborations. All the independent breweries, it's endless! It's so common these days: "We're doing a Faction Brewing, a Highland Park Brewery collaboration." Whatever it is.
Juan: Tap takeovers
Chris: Yeah! It's like the Screeching Weasel [laughs] and The Queers collaboration! A split 7". The brewers, they all know each other, they help each other out—if someone has problems with something, they run out (of ingredients), whatever. They work together, a community. It's very much a scene. It reminds me of the hardcore scene, which is why it's really cool. And in the same way, it kind of mirrors the whole hardcore scene backlash: "So and so is on a major label. They signed with this label and that label is distributed by Caroline (records)! And Caroline is part of EMI (Records) is part of whatever and they... build missiles somewhere!" [laughs]
Juan: Do you have any guilty pleasures as far as beers that are maybe corporate?
Chris: Not really…
Todd: Or are there any that you're just bummed about? There are some beers I really like and I'm like, "I can't drink that anymore, sorry guys!"
Chris: No, I'm not that hardcore about it [laughs], like being militant. Like someone's drinking a Bud and where you go up and [makes a slapping sound] "Noooooooo!!!!" [laughs]
Todd: No, never slap it out of someone else's hand, but you're just like, "I'm not gonna buy Ballast Point anymore. They got paid two billion dollars!"
Chris: That's the thing. If I have a choice, I'm going to choose something else. But If I'm at a place and the only thing they have is Bud and Ballast Point, I'm gonna be like, "I'm gonna have a beer now. I'm gonna drink Ballast Point." Whatever, who cares? But I'm not that....
Todd: Sellout! [laughs]
Chris: Yeah! Exactly! So what I'm saying is I'm a sellout! [laughs] Well, Trappist has an album on Relapse (Records), so clearly we're sellouts already.
Todd: Well, you're just getting missile money, so...
Chris: Yeah! Getting missile money! [laughs]
Juan: You've been known to have a diverse musical palate. What are you listening to lately that might not fall under the spectrum of the traditional hardcore/thrash stuff?
Chris: Everything! It's weird because every day I listen to something different at work, because I have a desk job. I have an office, so I listen to Spotify all day, which is great because you can just keep going down these rabbit holes. I've always been a music fan. If I'm out somewhere and there's a song playing—whatever it is, it could be Latin jazz—I have this weird thing where I have to know what it is. I can't just enjoy it and move on. It really bothers me if I never find out who the artist is or what the song is of something that I really like. That's what's so great about technology now. You have Shazam. I use Shazam all the time.

I was at a stop light and there was some guy cranking something in his car. Some rap song. I had my window down. "What is this? This is really good!" It actually worked! I Shazam actually found the song that this guy in another car was listening to.
Todd: Can you name one thing, through that methodology, that you really liked, that you were turned on to?
Chris: [opens his Shazam app] Most recent one I found was the song "Funky Worm" by the Ohio Players. "Big P" by Cannonball Adderley, which is from the *Live at the Lighthouse* album. Grant Green *Live at the Lighthouse*: really fucking good—just funky, jazzy, early '70s soulful stuff. A New York Dolls song "Bad Girl." I like New York Dolls but I'm not that familiar with them. "Ms. Judy's Farm" by the Faces. "Humble" by Kendrick Lamar. "Okay, that's a cool song!" Clinton Fearon, a reggae guy, the song "The Hunter." "99" by Hollie Cook. "Bulls Eye" by the Soul Jazz Orchestra. Orchestre Poly-Rythmo. It keeps going. "Groove with Me" by the Funky Organics. "Memphis Underground" by Herbie Mann. I listen to music all day.
Juan: I've seen people try to persuade you to bring back Slap A Ham and I'm going on the record to say that I don't think you should. [laughs]
Chris: How dare you! I was just about to announce the comeback and my ten-release roster. You just blew it for me. What a jerk! [laughs]
Juan: I really do think the label ended on a perfect note with all the bands that came out. Everything that came out—top to bottom—is great and it's very influential. But I was wondering: if you could have released more, which bands would make the cut?
Chris: When I was doing the label, it served a purpose at the time. It all started out that I just wanted to help out bands that I liked that I felt didn't have a lot of interest from other labels. That was really my goal because I was a fan of so much stuff.

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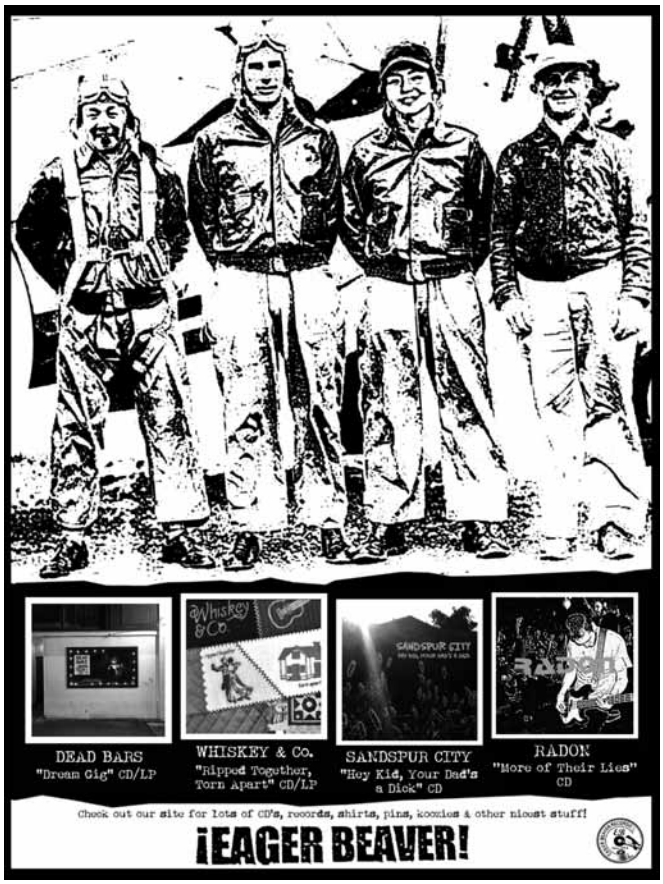

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Bands like Capitalist Casualties, no joke, they were around for five years before I put out their first 7". I always loved them. I didn't get it. They couldn't even get a song on a compilation. They had been around for a couple of years, they disappeared, and they started playing again around 1990. I went to their show and there's nobody there. I'm like, "I'm doing this label now. If you're into it, we should put out something!" Stuff like that where you're just really inspired. I don't think that's the world we live in now, because any band, any terrible band, can have their stuff available worldwide now. I've thought about it a few times over the years just because I thought, "It'd be fun to put out records again," just because I like the idea of doing fun packaging, come up with some weird angle, et cetera. Then I looked into it and realized how expensive it was

Todd: How long it takes.

Chris: That's what's funny. Putting out records way back when, I would wait for—if it was a month, I'd be calling the pressing plant: "Dude, what's going on?" I have friends who have labels now and they're telling me, "I've been waiting for this for five months and the pressing plant says they're working on the Beatles thing..." Everybody's out of the game for the next half year.

Todd: What I actually really appreciate about Spazz is that you intentionally fore-fronted the sense of humor into, on the surface, music that is dark and driving. What was the reason for that? Because if I just put something on, for someone's who's uninitiated, chances are they're gonna shit their pants. Where did that come from, because in this conversation you seem like a really nice, mellow, down-to-earth guy. [laughs]

Chris: I was going to say I don't think it was a conscious decision, but I take that back. We were trying not to be the stereotypical band. We had some songs that had serious subjects but eventually it just went in the direction of random....

Todd: Well you had songs about El Santo (Mexican luchador) and Orville Redenbacher (popcorn mogul).

Chris: Yeah, either random stories about friends that people wouldn't understand or things that happened to us—little vignettes of things that happened or an homage to another band we really like, someone we like, or something that's just a funny scenario. First of all, we wrote so many freaking songs. Seriously, I don't know what the count is, but I swear to god I think we wrote over two hundred songs.

There's so many goddamn releases. At a certain point your lyrics aren't going to be cream of the crop [laughs]. You're recording every couple months. Keep the conveyor belt going. But that's what we enjoyed, that's always been my favorite thing. Just constantly writing and coming up with something new and creating. Not so much playing. I enjoy playing live, but my favorite thing has always been: I just want to keep working on new stuff. Just keep writing new songs, putting out releases, that's what I enjoy. But that doesn't answer your question about the lyrical content. I think it's just because we kind of figured out, well, there are so many bands who are doing the anti-cop, anti-war, anti-poverty, anti-whatever. That message is just…

Todd: [joking] Infest is known as being jokey...

Chris: "Those wacky lads!" Because we love the music and love that style of music. Lyrically, I think I've always been this way. That's probably why I've always gravitated towards a more humorous approach to things. You have more of a possibility to write something original, even if you're writing about the same subject, as opposed to, "Fuck war! Fuck that! Bleah!" Okay, well, yeah, fuck war. But what if I came up with a funny way of saying that, some sort of roundabout way. That's kind of a funnier, more interesting song than just, "Fuck War, fuck bombs, fuck that!" [laughs]

I think we all figured that out early on—it's not going to have any sort of character or anything distinct about it: "This is our song about fuck cops, this is our anti-authority song, you should protest." How many angles can you come at that with? That, in combination with writing so many freaking songs—it just devolved into random shit about wrestling, kung fu, skateboarding, our friends, eating a burrito, and getting a soggy pizza in a bag. Anything! Because who gives a shit? Let's fucking go for it because that's what's funny and entertaining and interesting. And no one really cares because we're shouting, so you can't understand the words anyway! Let's just go for it!

Juan: Please explain that to me the song "The Box." The pizza in a bag.

Chris: There was a record store in San Francisco, Epicenter, that *MRR* had opened. It was in the Mission (District), and there was a place nearby that you'd order a slice of pizza and they'd give it to you in a bag and it'd be oily and soggy. I think Dan (Lactose, guitarist) wrote the lyrics for "The Box," which is just "Don't put it in a fucking bag, put it in a box!" [laughs]

Todd: It made me think that you're maybe the Billy Childish of powerviolence.

Chris: [laughs] I've never heard that one but, yeah, that's a good one. Where's the beer?

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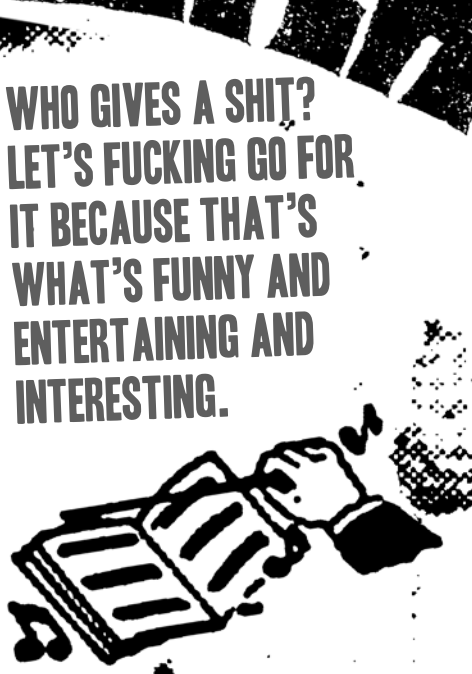

WHO GIVES A SHIT? LET'S FUCKING GO FOR IT BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT'S FUNNY AND ENTERTAINING AND INTERESTING.
AND NO ONE REALLY CARES BECAUSE WE'RE SHOUTING.

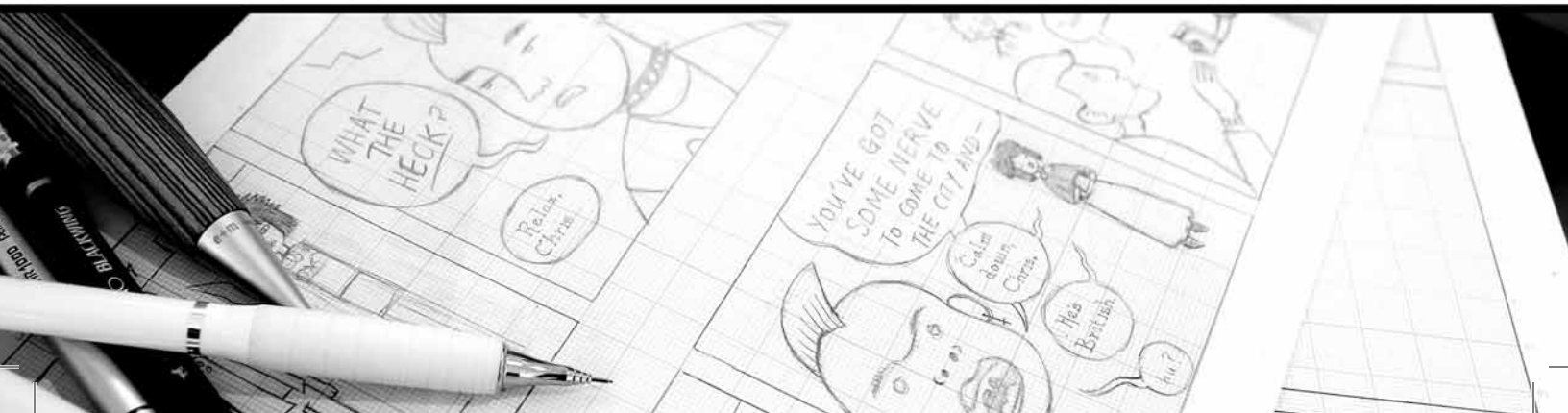
MARINAOMI

INTERVIEW BY TODD TAYLOR
PHOTOS BY RACHEL MURRAY FRAMINGHEDDU
LAYOUT BY DYLAN DAVIS

Cartoonist MariNaomi creates full worlds on the page, which is no easy feat. Largely working in autobiography and memoir, Mari employs emotionally honest storytelling and clean line work to tackle both the weighty (death, family, spirituality, misogyny, racism), and the everyday (crushes, work, food, clothes, friends) with a through-line of engaging readers as part of the conversation. Reading her work, I always feel I'm in capable hands. Her power is increased because she's very careful with what she does and doesn't present on the page. It's a deceptively simple presentation.

Those of us who create know that simplicity is rarely simple. I've zoomed through Mari's graphic novels *Dragon's Breath* and *Turning Japanese*, but instead of her themes and characters evaporating quickly like cleaning fluid swiped on a pane of glass, they stuck with me in almost invisible and smoky ways. Much like smells trigger deeply embedded memories, Mari's personal work is resonant, intersectional art of what it's like to be human. She's not only developed an enviable crisp craft on the page, it's masterfully imbued with large doses of heart and humor.

My memory is total shit, so I thought it'd be fun to reintroduce younger versions of Mari to her 2018 self by researching what she'd said in the past. It turned into an unintentional episode of *This Is Your Life*.



Todd: I'm going to do a lot of quoting you back to you today: "My golden rule is to tell my own secrets, not other people's. It's why I use a pseudonym."
Mari: Yeah, well that's not entirely—good grief. [laughs] I say a lot of stuff. That's part of the reason I use a pseudonym. I wanted to give my parents privacy. I write about my life and they're involved with my life. But it's funny 'cause they wanted complete privacy and then my Dad's bragging to all his friends: "Hey, my daughter has a book!" *Daaaad*!
Todd: Perhaps they want the control of being included or not.
Mari: I did point it out to him and he was like, "Oh, it's fine. You can use your name from now on." I've been doing this since 2004. When I came up with the pseudonym, it wasn't because of my parents at all. I was sitting in the back of a car with lots of drunk people, coming back from an art gallery opening and someone sat next to me. She recognized me as one of the artists she came to see. She got really excited and I suddenly felt very exposed. She was lovely, but I was like, "What if someone not so lovely shows up at my house one day?" But it's a pretty good golden rule: not to tell other people's secrets, or as little as possible. If you want to keep friends.
Todd: You are a _____?
Mari: Cartoonist. Although, in Los Angeles people think that means I animate, which I do not. And I say, "I make comics," but if I say that, they think I make superheroes, which I do not. Usually, I say, "I make comics about my life."
Todd: Quoting you, "Someone's always going to get offended, no matter what. They're all bringing their own shit to the table."
Mari: It's true. There's nothing you can do. [laughs] You will never do anything right.
Todd: Especially due to the autobiographical nature of your comics. You've been doing comics formally for twenty-one years?
Mari: 1997. February to March was my first comic.
Todd: That collection was *Estrus Comic*s, correct?
Mari: That's when I started. I think my first published work was either the end of '97 or the beginning of '98. I just jumped in it.
Todd: And you've been doing it consistently since?
Mari: Pretty consistently. There are definitely times where I have done less—living life. Being a twenty-something, then a thirty-something. Too busy getting laid. [laughs] Now I get to write about it.
Todd: Is it true that you don't like kids—blanket statement? We're not talking individual friends' children. Kids in general.
Mari: I hate everyone. [Both laugh hard.]
Todd: Which is an unpopular stance to take. I largely feel the same. My buddy Sean says, "If you can't control your bowels, you're not allowed in my house."
Mari: That seems very fair, although I have a lot of plastic sheets over my things because of the animals.

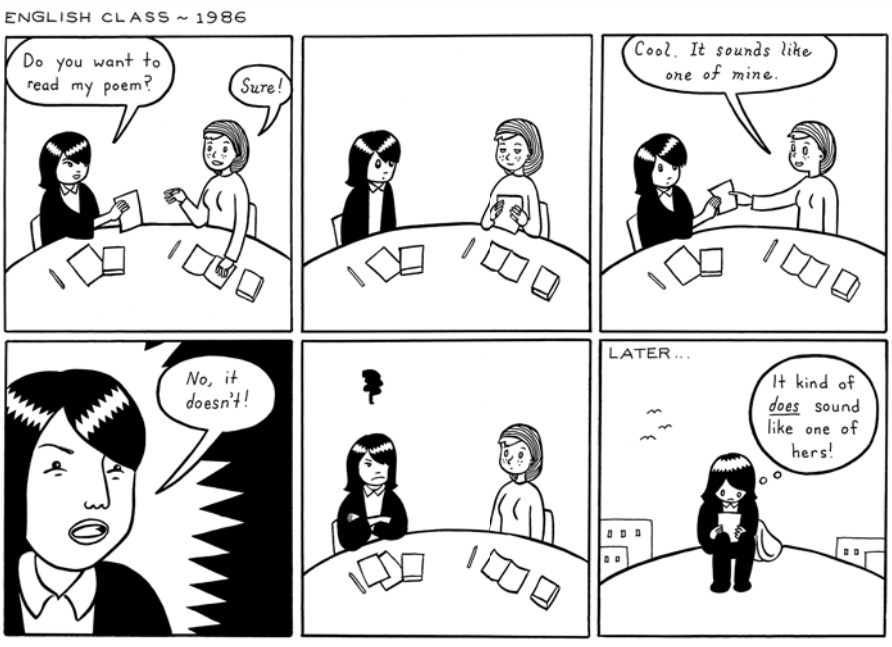
Recently, my sister had her second kid. She's got a three-year-old and a one-year-old and I'm getting a little better about kids.
Todd: I know a lot of people who are intentionally child-free.
Mari: I don't like kids around me. I kind of don't see the point. I have friends who are also childless. They're like, "Oh, did I make a mistake? Is no one going to take care of me when I'm old?" I'm not good at taking care of people. I yell at my dogs all the time. If there were people in my life I was supposed to take care of, guess who would get yelled at—and would actually understand what I was saying—and so would be distraught.

I understand a lot of people get into kids. There's something biological going on. People want to have sex and other people want to nurture. I have nurturing sides, too, like with my partner Gary. I want to take care of him and make him happy. But do I want to be covered in fecal matter and then have to worry about getting someone through college if the human race still exists in that amount of time—which I don't know that it will. But since my sister had kids, I'm a lot more open in that I like her kids and I like my friends' kids enough, but I don't want to grow one. [laughs]
Todd: I like them in doses.
Mari: Five, ten minutes. She just visited for about a week. It was so great seeing them, but it was just shocking. They've had some time to get used to this whole cycle of child rearing and caring, but I felt like it was a constant cycle where someone always needed to be taken care of. Someone was always grumpy. I get grumpy two days a month, maybe, and that's too much for me. Their bodies constantly need to be managed.

The one-year-old—we were at a restaurant—he had a spoon and he scooped up some salsa and stuck it in his mouth before anyone could do anything and that was the first time he ever had salsa. I don't think he liked it, to be honest. [laughs] The poor kid. He didn't know what he was doing. He started screaming; he finally calms down when my sister takes him away. But then he sees the table, has PTSD, starts screaming again.

Kids, I'm not into them. I definitely feel I'm not cut out for them, because in order to give yourself to another person that much, you just need so much devotion. I have that for my craft, absolutely, and I have that for my friends and certain elements of my life, but, ultimately, I don't see the pros of raising children. You know, they're going to grow up to hate you. [Todd laughs.] No, it's true, even if they love you. I love my parents so much but they drive me crazy. And if they do grow up and take care of you, it's just out of guilt. Whatever. The human race will be extinct in a few years. Thanks, Trump.

[To Todd] You didn't know that you were going to open that can of snakes filled with children, did you?
Todd: With a lot of people who put their craft high on their list of priorities, children become a lower priority. Children can take away from the very small amount of time and energy available to do what they want to do every day.
Mari: Yes. You don't get an identity for first several years of your kid's life. They don't have an identity yet.
Todd: Following that—"Kids in Mill Valley were like little grownups. They wore designer jeans and makeup and did grown-up things like dating and social ostracizing."
Mari: That was grade school. I was eight when I first encountered the designer jeans and the kids who were finger fucking. Eight!
Todd: Goddamn it.
Mari: I came from a small town and my parents are still married and that was the norm. Then I moved to Marin (Calif.) where nobody's parents were married and I feel like you grow up a little when something like that happens. It's like I jumped forward in time.


ENGLISH CLASS ~ 1986
Do you want to read my poem?
Sure!
Cool. It sounds like one of mine.
No, it doesn't!
LATER...
It kind of does sound like one of hers!

I was still a kid and they weren't. Everyone was much cooler than I was.

Todd: I think this is an early quote: "I wrote about wanting to have sex with Michael Jackson, at eight years old," and the zinger is, "Which actually was probably my only chance, right?"

Mari: I don't know if I'm the right gender for that. It's my first diary, my eight-year-old diary. But in case my parents wanted to go through my diary, I tried to disguise it with my own special code. I wrote s-e-x backwards and upside down. [laughs] I think it fooled them. But, for the record, I never had sex with Michael Jackson.

Which I'm grateful for. I used to be a video game producer at Sega. Michael Jackson was in a video game that I produced. I was talking to my co-producer in Japan, who voice directed Michael. He was very scared of Michael Jackson. This must have been before all the pedophile stuff came out. He definitely was having some body dysphoria issues and was getting all the surgeries. Michael Jackson had a bandage on his nose, but when he turned his face away from the light, my friend said, "There was nothing there." The light just went right though his bandage, where his nose should've been. It terrified him. Michael Jackson got really messed up.

Todd: Is it true you've never eaten fast food?

Mari: No, I used to eat fast food, but I don't anymore. I'm allergic to garlic, so I have to be really careful about eating processed foods because they'll slip that in. Also, I don't eat factory-farmed food. I just think that's not okay.

Todd: It's brutal.

Mari: I can't even believe factory farming exists. It's horrible. It's disgusting. It's not a shock when people treat each other so horribly when we're basically torturing animals to death. Living your whole life in a cage. Ugh. Oh, I do eat In-N-Out sometimes, but they don't factory farm. And I mostly eat their French fries, mostly on the road. Processed foods, I don't generally eat.

Todd: Have you always identified as an atheist?

Mari: Yeah, pretty much. I think I've prayed twice in my life and I wrote comics about both times.

Todd: There's a really nice part in your book *Turning Japanese* about feeling energies.

Mari: It's really all semantics at the end of the day, but although I don't believe that I know everything, I feel pretty confident there isn't some person in the sky directing everything. It just seems a little far-fetched to me. But it's not that I don't believe that there are other things that haven't been discovered yet. I certainly have had strange things happen in my life, or felt strange tingling sensations. That scene in *Turning Japanese* was one of them. I believe there is other stuff out there. I don't believe they're ghosts in the traditional sense of, "Hey, this person died, but they're still here"—that just seems like wishful thinking to me. It's too nicely wrapped up. I think religion is necessary for some people in the same way that I believe that school's necessary for some people.

Todd: Structure.

Mari: Yeah, exactly. I'm a high school dropout. It was one of the best things I ever did. I did well in school but I didn't enjoy it and I don't think I got much out of it. Same with religion. But I think it's really important—especially for people who are more morally ambiguous. They need to be shown, "Hey, you've got to treat people nicely." Maybe they need religion to do that. That doesn't seem to be working for all Christians, however. But if it works for some, then that's good. Some people I love very much are religious. I don't judge them for it.

Todd: I'm trying to tie some things together. So, how do you self-identify? Here's another quote: "Queer, non-white, liberal artist woman in a scary, hate-crime filled Trumpocalyptic nightmare."

Mari: Did I write that?

Todd: Yeah.

Mari: Wow. It sounds like me. This is kind of like an episode of *This Is Your Life*, like you're going to ring up my high school teacher who I bailed on. Molly the cat is going to take off her mask and become my first boyfriend. [laughs] That's exciting.... That sounds like something I might tweet.

Todd: But you're not in disagreement with that?

Mari: No. It really depends on who I'm talking to, the environment, and what it's for. Normally, if someone says, "Hi, who are you?" I'm like, "I'm a cartoonist." Because that's what I spend all my time doing. It's just assumed I'm a feminist because I probably wouldn't talk to anyone who I didn't consider a feminist. I've never introduced myself: "Hi, I'm a feminist."... Maybe that was my Myspace profile. Or Friendster. I've been around for awhile.

Todd: Since you draw many autobiographical comics, you got to draw a person, mostly yourself, and somebody that you yourself didn't see in popular culture. What did you find is the most gratifying part of that process?

Mari: Obviously, I enjoy telling stories. It can be really difficult and painful, even the good stuff—drawing's really hard. I get little endorphin moments when I get it right. That's exciting. So maybe that's all I'm living for.

I THINK THAT ART IS A GREAT WAY TO FIX YOURSELF, BUT I DON'T BELIEVE, NECESSARILY, THAT THE ART IS GOING TO BE GOOD OR SHOULD BE SHARED WITH OTHER PEOPLE.

Because I wouldn't say that the whole process makes me happy, but there are little points in it that sometimes come out of nowhere, like an epiphany if I'm having a really hard time with a trouble spot in a story. When it comes to me, it's such a great moment. Holding my book in my hand for the first time is also very exciting. For the first twenty-four hours after I finish a book, I feel really good and then I fall into the existential depression.

Todd: The post-partum.

Mari: Yeah. [laughs]

Todd: You gave life to this thing.

Mari: It's like children. You have to nurture them and promote them. You're kind of stuck with them even if you don't like them. It's hard, especially when you do a book. It takes so long to do it, by the time you're done with it, you're better at storytelling and at art than when you started it. By the time it gets published, a year or three later, you're so far beyond that, but it's suddenly new for everyone else, so you have to act excited about it. That's why I love self-publishing so much. It's very instantly gratifying.

Todd: You've also stated that, "I'm kind of past catharsis with my comics—now I just want to tell a good story."

Mari: It depends. One of the books I'm working on right now—that may never be a book—I'm using that as catharsis. But, generally, I don't anymore.

Todd: Why is that?

Mari: I think that art is a great way to fix yourself, but I don't believe, necessarily, that the art is going to be good or should be shared with other people. Sometimes it's interesting to see that, but most of the time, it's not. I would work out my problems when I was younger by writing in diaries, and as a memoirist you'd think that would be very valuable to me because I could go back and say, "Okay, what was actually happening?"

But it's so fucking boring! And this was my catharsis. I'm just going in circles about some guy or some girl. [High and whiny voice] "What if they don't even like me? Why didn't they call me back?" I'm older now. I don't spin that much about stuff. I have a lot more self-confidence, which is the greatest thing about getting older.

I still have my moments though. When you're working on the page, you're not getting feedback, whereas when you're talking to a friend or therapist you're not just going in circles in your head. I've never been to a therapist, but I think there were many points in my life when I should have. I'm one hundred percent pro-therapy. Someday, I'm sure something bad enough will happen that I'm going to need therapy. There are times in my life I went through where I wonder—"How did I not die? How did I get through that without a professional?" Somehow I did.

Todd: Popular culture celebrates people who run really hot, and die early or tragically. That means there's less space for people who have longer forms of creativity. I appreciate those people's work.

Mari: Well, they get better at it. Some of them.

Todd: The myth is that you get a burst of inspiration. You sit down, you pound, you sweat, you bleed, and then it's done and it gets published.

Mari: Editing's important. So when I started my first book, *Kiss and Tell*, which was about my dating life from age zero to twenty-two, its whole purpose was catharsis. I was having one bad relationship after another and wanted to get to the root of it. I thought comics might be a fun way to do it. "What am I doing wrong? I'm the common denominator. All these other people are going off and having these great relationships." I wrote a short comic for each person I'd been in a relationship with or had a crush on. It's a mostly complete list.

Todd: You had an Excel spreadsheet of them?

Mari: I did have a spreadsheet. [laughs] There were a lot of people. I had some good times. When I first thought up the book, I didn't think I'd end it at age twenty-two. By the time I was twenty two, I was getting out of my first long-term relationship and I had three hundred pages worth of material. "It's time to stop. The rest will be another book."

The more I did the stories, the more I realized that if it was truly for catharsis, it's not a fun read. The fun parts are the embarrassing things that happened or the dramatic things that will maybe not encapsulate the whole relationship, maybe barely just touches on the relationship, but who cares about boring relationships? I care about fart jokes and I care about getting my period all over some guy right as my parents walk in the room.

Todd: "I shoved my boyfriend in the closet and he was covered in my blood."

Mari: My only regret about that story was that I didn't talk about race more, because he was black and I'm not. He lived in Marin City. He was wearing a white tank top and was covered in my blood, driving home at midnight through a town that was especially super racist against black people. Mill Valley was a very white town, probably still is. He was constantly getting pulled over. The driving while black thing was totally true, and especially true there.

After he left, I was terrified for him. I know he was terrified for himself. He was

driving some junky little car through Mill Valley trying to go home and hoping he's not going to get randomly pulled over... But I do think that was a pretty good story.

Todd: Perhaps your comics were an act of therapy? Direct quote again, "By the time I reached my thirties, I wasn't sure how much of my personality was me, and how much of it was composed of my relationship selves," which is an astute observation.

Mari: That is why I started the book, but less than half way through it, I realized that wasn't sustainable as a good story. I feel like my whole twenties was just me trying to discover, "Who am I?"—because I was always in a relationship. There were many times when I was trying to get out of relationships where I wanted to try being alone, but I also had a huge fear. So I'd be alone and then, suddenly, the next guy who came along was interested—"Oh, save me from myself."

For the longest time I wasn't sure about my interests. When you're young, the bands you like and the clothes you wear are what defines you, and most of those things I'd adopted from other people—especially boyfriends, but also friends—I wondered, "Well, what part of this is genuinely me?" But by my thirties, I wondered what was I in such a rush to get to know? [laughs] That was also when I was finally alone and realized how awesome it is. But it took me a long time to get there.

Todd: I want to talk about sex and memoir.

Mari: It's funny that you mention sex and memoir. I don't like sex scenes in movies. I feel like I'm a sexual person but I don't necessarily want to think about other people having sex or see them having sex. I find ninety-nine percent of all the population just not sexually interesting to me. Maybe that's why porn has never been my thing. That would be great if I found everyone attractive. How wonderful—especially as a bisexual—that would have been for me.

If I'm watching a movie and there's a sex scene, it's always so contrived. It's just kind of gross. It's kind of like sitting in a comedy club where I feel like I'm expected to feel this very specific thing on someone else's terms and I don't: to laugh or to feel sexy. My sexuality is very specific to me. I will feel sexy on my terms. You can't make me feel that way. Yeah, it's a good thing that movies aren't live. [laughs] And they're not looking over at me, "Oh, is she turned on?" So I don't write a lot of sex scenes in my books because I don't want to subject anyone to that.

Todd: With your writing, it's very powerful because you are very careful with what you do and don't present. Visually, there are parts that are highly detailed, yet when someone's sitting, sometimes you don't draw the chair. The white space is evocative, too. You're giving us more than just bread crumbs. You're shaping a different way to look at the world and that's powerful.

Mari: As a reader, I like having to do a little work. As a writer, I don't like making it easy because that's boring.

Todd: Easy becomes the wrapping that someone tosses away. The harder stuff, if you hook them, is more resonant. Hopefully.

Mari: Was it McDonald's that did a focus group test where they had the ice cream in a flat cone and they had another cone that had little grooves in it? People always liked it more with the grooves because they had to try harder to get the stuff out. It made it just a more exciting experience. Hands down, all the time, they always preferred that—speaking of factory farming. [laughs]

Todd: But also, when your husband reads your work and says, "This is good...."

Mari: [Soft groans]

Todd: This is interesting, "You know you've failed."

Mari: Yeah.

Todd: Why is that?

Mari: He'll tell me if something's not good. But I want to see him go, "Oh my god!" Obviously, when you're doing a longer form, like a graphic novel or memoir, not every page can be, "Oh my god." I always joke that he's kind of a robot because he's an engineer. He doesn't display a lot of emotions, so if I can get him to display emotion…

Todd: A robot tear.

Mari: Yeah, yeah. Where they short circuit. It's very exciting for me. Or if I get him to laugh out loud, that's my goal.

Todd: The second long work I read of yours, after *Dragon's Breath* was *Turning Japanese*. It's a story about growing up in a multi-racial family, also being an outsider of two cultures.

I LOST INTEREST IN TRYING TO MAKE HIM LOVE ME.
I never knew crickets could have so much PERSONALITY.
These two seem like they're friends. Maybe I should set them free.
cricket holding cell

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MY BREASTS WERE FEELING TENDER THAT DAY, SO I BORROWED ONE OF MY MOM'S PADDED BRAS.
AFTER SCHOOL, A FRIEND AND I STARTED FOOLING AROUND.
WHEN HIS HAND STARTED CREEPING TOWARD MY BREASTS, I DIVERTED IT DOWNWARDS.
You're funny. Most girls do the opposite.
Heh. Yeah.
I MET HIM ON HAIGHT STREET.
WHEN WE TALKED ON THE PHONE I COULDN'T TELL IF HE WAS TRYING TO IMPRESS ME OR REPEL ME.
and then... last night... I took a shower... but I wasn't alone! Tee hee!
ONE DAY I SPOTTED HIM IN MILL VALLEY WALKING HAND-IN-HAND WITH A CHEERLEADER.

Mari: Multiculturalism is tough. You have to feel pretty confident about being an outsider. Despite that I wrote a book about it, I've always felt pretty comfortable. "Oh, well, I'm exceptional." [laughs] That's probably a self-defense mechanism. No one's going to accept you as their own if you're not white and you grow up in a white town. You're always going to be "other." I always had this feeling, "Oh, I'll go to Japan and I'll fit in." Oh god, no. It's like going to Mars and expecting the little green alien creatures to embrace us. You don't even know their language. You have nothing in common with them.

Todd: Your mother was born in Japan.

Mari: They live in Japan right now.

Todd: But visiting Japan, did it help you understand part of her behavior?

Mari: I'm still figuring out things. What's really helping me understand her behavior isn't visiting Japan; it's meeting other Japanese Americans. I have a very close friend, Yumi Sakugawa, who's also a cartoonist. She's Japanese American, and I see similarities when she talks about her family. Or when I first met Kiyoshi Nakazawa. That's what we bonded about, not comics, even though he was my first comic book friend. My favorite conversations with him were about our wacky Japanese families. "Oh, I didn't realize this was a Japanese thing. I just thought my mom had this peculiarity."

But, also, it lets me know when my mom has not followed certain rules. I just respect her so much more because the Japanese are rule followers. It's very important there. I actually don't think that's necessarily a bad thing. It's really nice for when you're walking down the street and not getting mugged. [laughs] I've gotten to know my mom through having Japanese-American artist friends.

Todd: Okay, so you've had tons of jobs over the years. You worked in a video store for two years, made wallets for overeducated people.

Mari: They were these vinyl wallets. It was basically a sweatshop. It was me and a bunch of other fourteen- to fifteen-year-old girls getting paid five bucks an hour to work these giant, rickety machines on a frickin' pier in Sausalito and I was there when the big earthquake struck. This whole room full of all of this heavy machinery just tumbling us all around. It was really exciting. We'd just stamp on the logo of Harvard or whatever. We were all high school dropouts, so we were not going to these places. Yeah, that was fun. [laughs]

Todd: You were also a banker and were promoted very quickly.

Mari: Well, being a high school dropout, I felt like I should be very ambitious if I didn't want to end up—for some reason, this was my fear—working at a gas station. I don't know why that was my fear. I don't think that sounds so bad now.

Todd: Have you ever worked any service job that you would consider non-demeaning?

Mari: The bank was the closest thing, partly because—and there were still demeaning elements of it—but that particular bank catered to super rich people and they did not discourage being rude to customers, which I thought was amazing. They would encourage it even, I would say, to not take shit from people. It was nice. It's not bank-wide. It was just that one branch. I had to quit because I didn't like their business practices. I couldn't abide.

Todd: In your essay, "Apology Not Acceptable," why do you think forgiveness is overrated?

Mari: It certainly helps you to get past something. This is the thing I've been trying to catharsis my way out of. There's a person who got left out of *Kiss & Tell*. She was my first girl kiss and she was my best friend for many, many years. She did some horrible betrayal in 2001 and I didn't find out about it until we'd stopped being friends for ten years. The whole ten years, I thought it was my fault that we had stopped being friends, that I'd been a bad friend. She let me feel that way for ten years.

I eventually confronted her about it and the response I got was, "That was a long time ago. Get over it." which was not what I expected. It was a response to a—now, given—very, very mean email I'd sent her. We hadn't spoken in ten years. She pretty much destroyed my life. I had to claw my way out of that depression hole. It was really hard. So I was coming from that place. Very recently, I reconnected with her and I found out that that email she sent back then wasn't actually from her. It was from her controlling boyfriend and she actually did feel really horrible about it all this time. This was a few weeks ago, so this is very new.

I'm still struggling with my feeling about what she did. I forgive her. Basically, as soon as I heard that she was sorry—"Oh, good." I could get past this. I was absolutely not able to forgive her or get closure on my own, which is so frustrating because I don't like to think I'm a dweller. I didn't forgive her and I didn't think she deserved to be forgiven. Now I do, I think. I don't know. I'm still working through my feelings. [laughs]

Todd: Contrition's a good step.

Mari: I feel good about things now and as soon as I heard that from her, everything lifted. It was annoyingly magical. [laughs] It was a burden. I didn't want to carry the burden, but when someone does something shitty—a lot of people do a lot of shitty things—you shouldn't be able to just do penance, three Hail Marys and then just get off the hook. No. Louis C.K. shouldn't have a comeback. He did some really shitty things.

Todd: There's no second act for that. Fuck him.

Mari: Let them cry into their money.

Todd: Their feelings are secondary to everybody who was harmed—and those people are still harmed.

Mari: Yeah. That doesn't go away. I'm not going to watch another *Cosby Show*. Bill Cosby does not get to be forgiven. I hope that all those people who he hurt are able to somehow not forgive him but live their lives in peace. They shouldn't forgive him. Why should they forgive him?

Todd: Absolutely not.

Mari: Every time I've had a #MeToo moment, guess what? That gets built into what I am, from that point on." That makes me trust people less. When I found out that my friend had betrayed me, I had just gotten engaged with my husband. It was supposed to be a happy time. Suddenly, I couldn't trust him. I couldn't trust my friends. I'd wonder, "What else is happening that I don't know about?" In a nutshell, she'd been sleeping with my boyfriend at the time. [Makes frustrated sound.] Uuuuuuggggghh. People always say when you're being cheated on, "Oh, she knows." But I had no clue.

I'm listening to this really good audio book right now by Ann Rule about her friendship with Ted Bundy. She had no fucking idea. He hid things so well. He manipulated her and so many people. She thought, "Wait. No. He helps people. He worked at the crisis hotline. He spends his life helping people. This

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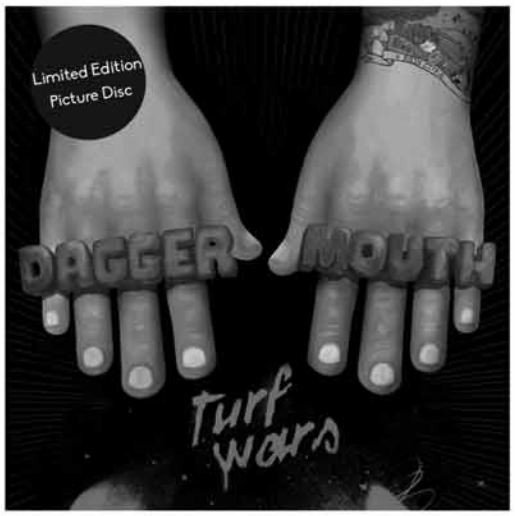

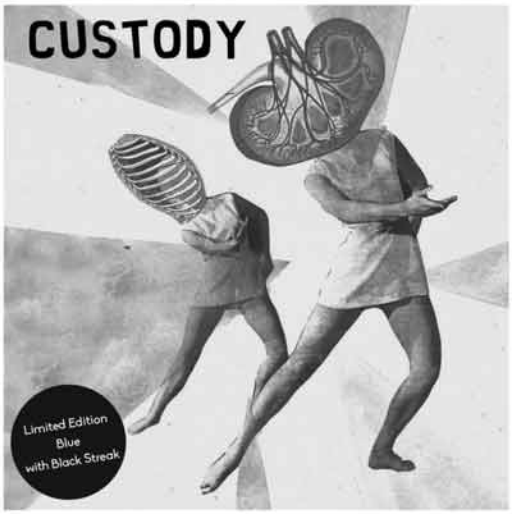

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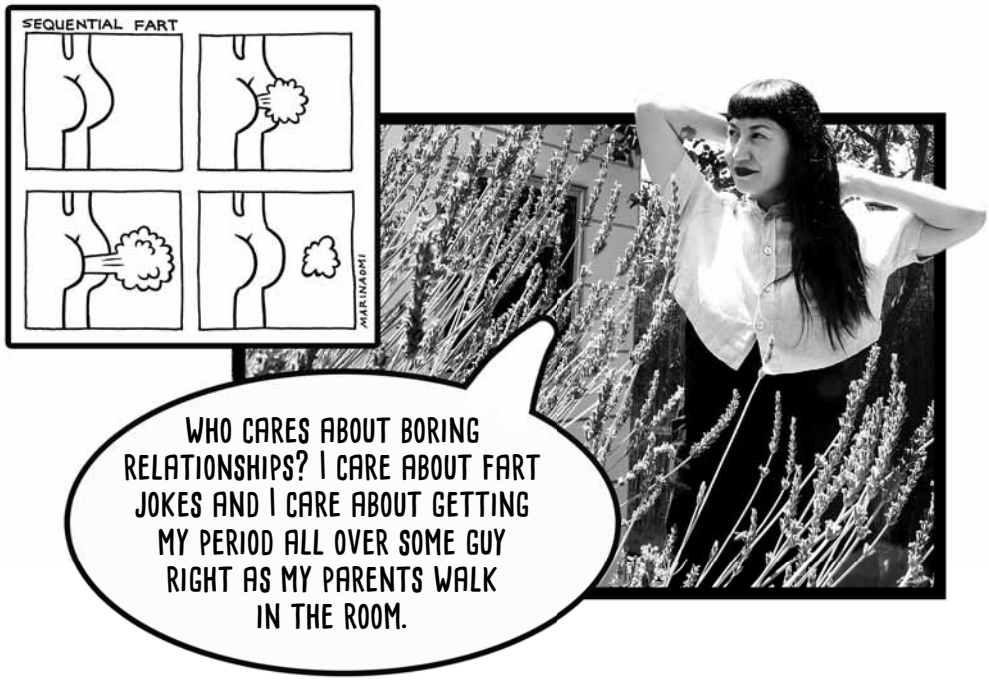
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WHO CARES ABOUT BORING RELATIONSHIPS? I CARE ABOUT FART JOKES AND I CARE ABOUT GETTING MY PERIOD ALL OVER SOME GUY RIGHT AS MY PARENTS WALK IN THE ROOM.

isn't the guy I know." But he was a fucking psychopath—and obviously not everyone's a psychopath—it's nuts. I'm fascinated with serial killers because I have extreme guilt if I step on a snail. I did it once when I was fifteen and I still feel bad about it, almost thirty years later. I've never talked to anyone who has had to get over that big of a betrayal. Obviously, Ann Rule's was way worse than mine, so I was really interested from that vantage point.

People do change. This is the struggle I'm having with this current ex-friend. I think when I was friends with her before, I thought she could do no wrong. Now I'm seeing aspects of her personality where I'm like, "Oh, yeah. That's problematic." But I'm in my forties now instead of my twenties, so I see things a lot differently.

Todd: You can be your own emotional editor. Let's discuss your essay, "It Happened to Me: I Was Sexually Harassed Onstage at a Comic Convention Panel."

Mari: [sarcastically] Oh, yeah, good times. He was actually part of who I was writing about in not forgiving people. I was on a queer panel and this guy who I, at first, assumed was gay because he was on a queer panel, but it turns out he wasn't. He was the author who came up with the first gay superhero. His name is Scott Lobdell. He was inappropriately flirting with me throughout the panel and it became pretty clear pretty fast, "Oh, no. This is a heterosexual guy and he's being really inappropriate." He made these gross innuendos and I was trying to give him signals, get away from him, and just get through the hour as quickly as possible. He was doing and saying things that under normal circumstances, I'd be like, "Hey, dude, don't. Stop." But I'm on this panel.

Todd: Also because the idea behind the panel is counter to this behavior.

Mari: Yeah. And there were people dressed up as his character in the audience. He had fans there. I didn't have any fans that I knew of. I didn't want to ruin the panel. Everybody's jokey-jokey and he was inappropriate to others too. He was definitely being a jerk to everyone.

Todd: That sucks.

Mari: It got worse and worse. Anyway, we get through it and I'm like, "Get me away from this guy." Then he made some kind of racist joke about my squinty eyes. It was just fucking bad. It's not like he overtly did anything. He didn't grab me. I think he might have touched my arm—yeech. But he didn't do anything Harvey Weinstein level. It was icky and I didn't name him in the article. I just wrote about this experience, how I didn't really realize how affected I was by it until I started crying afterwards in the car.

I was just ashamed that I let it happen and writing the essay was a huge act of catharsis. It really helped to talk about it because I hadn't stood up for myself before. So, here I'm really standing up for myself by publishing it. In my head, I wrote it with the idea that, "Maybe someone like him will read it and realize, 'Oh, just 'cause she's not saying 'no' doesn't mean you should keep plunging forward."

The article, unfortunately, went viral. I think that was my first taste of how awful success can be. Now I know to expect that if anything goes viral, I'm going to get trolls immediately. "Oh, no, there's over a thousand likes. I'm about to be called a cunt. Okay, brace yourself. You're going to get some anti-feminist MRA guy." Every time. It's like fucking clockwork.

After it went viral, I couldn't sleep. I was staring at my phone all the time, worried I was going to miss something from people I actually cared about. People in the comments were trying to figure out who he was. "Well, no, it's not really about him. If anyone wants to tell him, it should be me, not some angry, pitchfork-wielding fans." So somebody figured it out. It wasn't too hard. She's a reporter. I didn't want it to be about him. I guess she must have gone to him and told him about it. Then he went back to her and said, "Well, I'd like to publicly apologize," do some damage control.

At the time, when it was happening, I mentioned that I had a husband and he was sitting right there in the audience. Because that's a pretty basic tactic to deflect. So he apologized to my husband! "Sorry about that, dude." And in his public apology, he apologized to my husband again [deep sigh]. But, really, it was a non-apology because he's like, "I'm sorry you felt that way. I was trying to be funny. Ha, ha." Standard. I'm like, fuck that.

Todd: Victim blaming.

Mari: I was having so much fun in that panic attack. [laughs] When he got outed, that's when I learned his name. I went back and looked at the comic he made. It was so gratuitous. He's not gay. He was like, "Oh, what can I do that will sell?" He is not loved by all, but he's still working. He's got a lot of fans and so that's why he keeps getting work. I wasn't trying to hurt him. As annoyed as I am by him and as much as I don't forgive him, I still feel kind of bad about that because that wasn't my intention.

Because, let's face it. I've dealt with so many guys like that over the period of my life. I've gotten so much sexual harassment in workspaces and beyond. I don't want to make someone an example. I just want it all to fucking stop, you know? So why pick on this one guy who clearly has no social skills? There's something wrong with him. Misogyny is part of the problem, but I think his problem runs much deeper than that. Being a fifty-year-old virgin might be one of them. [laughs] Did I say that out loud?

Todd: Completely shifting gears, to wrap this up. When was the first time you thought you had cancer?

Mari: Well—[laughs]—when I was eleven.

Todd: [smiles]

Mari: Nice research. [laughs] I felt a little lump in my boob and then I felt another lump in my other boob and they hurt. I was keeping this in for weeks. "Oh my god, I'm going to die. My parents are going to be so devastated." Then we all went out to see *Terms of Endearment*. Spoiler alert: she dies of cancer at the end. My mom's crying and my dad's like, "That movie was stupid," and I'm like, "That movie sucked. I hated that movie." Then we get home [quavering, crying voice] "Mom, I have something to tell you. I have cancer." She looks up, "Oh, no. We'll get you to a doctor." I go and this woman looks and she starts laughing at me. She's like, "No, you're just developing breasts." Wah, wah, wah, wah.

TOP 5s

Andy Garcia

1. Tozcos, *Sueños Deceptivos* LP
2. Hankwood And The Hammerheads, Self-titled LP
3. La Contra Ola, *Synth Wave and Post Punk from Spain 1980-86* 2 x LP
4. Suburban Lawns, Self-titled LP reissue
5. Stiff Love, Self-titled EP

Art Ettinger

• *Queercore: How to Punk a Revolution* (movie)
• The Interrupters, *Fight the Good Fight* LP
• The Generators, *Broken Stars & Crooked Stripes* LP
• Street Dogs, *Stand for Something or Die for Nothing* LP
• Various Artists, *Turn It Around: The Story of East Bay Punk* 2 x LP

Bill Pinkel

• Maniac, *Dead Dance Club* LP
• The Brokedowns, *Sick of Space* LP
• Superchunk, *What a Time to Be Alive* LP
• Neighborhood Brats, *Night Shift* 7"
• *Kitchen Confidential* audiobook, authored and read by Anthony Bourdain, RIP

Chris Mason

1. Alice Bag, *Blueprint* LP
2. Freak Genes, *Qwak Qwak* LP
3. Sunshine Ward, *Nuclear Ambitions* LP
4. Warm Bodies, Self-titled 12"
5. Hop Along, *Bark Your Head Off Dog* LP

Chris Terry

• Pretty Flowers, *Why Trains Crash* LP
• Death Engine, *Place Noire* LP
• Pusha T, *Daytona* LP
• Nickelus F, *Stuck* LP
• Rixe, *Collection* LP

Craven Rock

1. Al Scorch, Poke LaFarge at Tractor Tavern
2. *Raw: My Journey into the Wu-Tang* by Lamont "U-God" Hawkins (book)
3. *The Infinite Wait and Other Stories* by Julia Wertz (graphic novel)
4. Anybody Killa, Sleeper 72, Deep Qualid, Pill Brigade, Enasnimi at El Corazon
5. *The Gold Seekers* (movie, 2017, Paraguay)

Cynthia Pinedo

Five "Something Old, Something New" Albums I've Been Listening to
1. The Ergs!, *dorkrockcordrod*
2. La Luz, *Floating Features*
3. Tony Molina, *Dissed and Dismissed*
4. I'm still listening to The Bananas, *The First 10 Years*
5. The Get Up Kids, *Kicker*

Daryl Gussin

• No Blues 7", tie with The Blankz, *White Baby* 7", tie with dimber, *Take Me Out* 7"
• Pretty Flowers, *Why Trains Crash* LP
• MACHINEkit, *DYSAPPEARENCER* LP
• The Brokedowns, *Sick of Space* LP
• Alice Bag, *Blueprint* LP

Designated Dale

Top 5 Cover Songs of the Incomparable David Bowie
• The Candy Snatchers, "Suffragette City"
• Motörhead, "Heroes"
• Dramarama, "Candidate"
• Big Drill Car, "Black Country Rock"
• Gaby Moreno, "Five Years"

Gabby Gonzalez

Punk Bands of Today
• Blotter
• Drool
• Lunch Lady
• Strutter
• Aborted Tortoise

George Lopez

• Belgrado live at Zebulon, 04/26/18
• Hankwood And The Hammerheads live at 1st Street Pool, 05/19/18
• Lost Balloons, *Liquor Store/Dirty Sandy* 7"
• Oscura Luna live at Memorial Day Pachanga in Boyle Heights, 05/28/18
• Neanderthal, *Fighting Music* discography

Jimmy Alvarado

• Flat Worms, *Red Hot Sand* 7"EP
• Physique, *Punk Life Is Shit* 12"EP
• Just Head, Electric Ferrets, Bastard Son, and La Tuya, live at Café NELA 5/12/18
• Ruleta Rusa, *Viviendo Una Maldicion* LP
• Die Kreuzen, *Cows & Beer* 7"EP

Juan Espinosa

• Geld and Long Knife live at the Five Star Bar
• The Estranged / Public Eye, Split 7"
• Slant, *Demo* 2018 CS
• Spazz, *Sweatin' to the Oldies* 2 x LP
• FIFA World Cup 2018

Kayla Greet

1. Following Pinned In Place and Marriage Material around on tour for four days: Portland, Astoria, Olympia, and Seattle.
2. Hiking with real wolves in the woods with Todd, Jennifer, and Toby during their visit to Seattle!
3. Managing to see Worriers (at the Showbox) and PEARS (at the Highline) on the same night at two different shows. Seven bands in all that night!
4. Seeing Green Day fans lose their minds at two shows from The Longshot, Wild Buffalo in Bellingham and Chop Suey in Seattle.
5. Getting laid off from a job I hated. Fuck that place.

Kevin Dunn

1. Fur Coats, *Milkdromeda* EP
2. Limp Wrist, *Facades* LP
3. Lillingtons, *Stella Sapiente* LP
4. Superchunk, *What a Time to be Alive* LP
5. Alice Bag, *Blueprint* LP

Kurt Morris

1. Camp Cope, *How to Socialise & Make Friends*
2. *I Feel Weird* #3 (comic)
3. Ellen Forney, *Marbles* (graphic memoir)
4. Black Flag, *My War*
5. Mental health advocacy

MariNaomi

Top 5 Patreons I Give My Hard-Earned Money to
• Yumi Sakugawa, cartoonist, meditation expert
• Taleen Kali, cosmic-punk rock goddess
• Rita Sapunor, autobio cartoonist

Getting laid off from a job I hated.

• Gabrielle Bell,
autobio cartoonist
• Julia Wertz, autobio cartoonist

Mark Twistworthy

• MeanGirls,
Is This Me Forever LP
• Red Hare, *Little Acts of Destruction* LP
• Come Holy Spirit, *Asters and Disasters* LP
• The Shifters, *Just Sat Down* 7"
• Maniac, *Dead Dance Club* LP

Matt Average

• Geld,
Perfect Texture 12"EP, and live
• Giant Haystacks,
This Is All There Is CD-R
• Abolitionist, *The Instant* LP
• Blues Lawyer, *Guess Work* LP
• *Bullitt* at The Nuart (movie)

Matt Werts

• Great Plains, *Born in a Barn*
• Various Artists,
London Is the Place for Me 2
• Ted Hawkins, *Watch Your Step*
• Various Artists,
Wayfaring Strangers: Cosmic American Music
• Moolah, Self-titled

Michelle Kirk

Top 5 Albums of Spring 2018
1. Wooden Shjips, *V*
2. Graveyard, *Peace*
3. Courtney Barnett, *Tell Me How You Really Feel*
4. Screaming Females,
All at Once
5. Moon Duo, *Jukebox Babe / No Fun*

Mike Dumps

• Future Virgins, *Doomsday Raga* (on repeat forever)
• dimber, *"Take Me Out" b/w "Sons & Daughters"* 7"
• The Sidekicks, *Happiness Hours*
• Radon, *More of Their Lies*
• Spit-take, *Falling Star*

Mike Faloon

1. Anthony Cronin, *No Laughing Matter: The Life & Times of Flann O'Brien* (book)
2. Kate DiCamillo, *Flora & Ulysses* (book)
2. Janelle Monae, "Pynk" video
3. Plan B, *From Outer Space* LP
4. Red Dons, *Dead Hand of Tradition* LP
5. Summertime

Mike Fournier

• *The Other Night at Quinn's*, by Mike Faloon (book)
• *Fluke Fanzine* #15
• Gnards, *Big Finish* CS
• Parquet Courts,
Wide Awake LP
• Protomartyr, *Consolation* EP

Mike Frame

1. Razor Boys, Self-titled LP
2. Beltones, *My Old Man* 7" reissue
3. Lee Harvey Oswald Band, *Blastronaut* LP
4. The Coup, entire catalog
5. Impiety, live in Rapid City

Nighthawk

Good Chicago Bands
• Eephus
• Krayola
• Hot Lips Messiah
• The Gunshy
• Eephus

Paul Silver

1. Meatwave, Wide Angles, Oscar Bait, Dog & Wolf, Fuck You Idiot at Quenchers, Chicago
2. Pinned In Place, *Rubbernecking at the Gates of Hell* CS
3. The Smoking Popes, Bad Cop/Bad Cop, Odd Robot at Soda Bar, San Diego
4. The Creeps,
Beneath the Pines LP
5. La Escalera Fest 7, San Diego

Rene Navarro

1. Motown Records
2. My guardian and companion Kimura.
3. Riding my bike around L.A. listening to Pedal Strike
4. Isaac Asimov
5. Rata Negra tied with Rata Blanca

Replay Dave

• Radon, *More of Their Lies*
• Squadron, *My Other Brother Daryl* 7"
• Guided By Voices, *Space Gun*
• Mike Llerena & The Nerve, *Old Haunts & New Horizons*
• Fastbacks, *Answer the Phone Dummy*

Rev. Nørb

• Mini Meltdowns, Self-titled 7"
• Trevor White, *"Understood" b/w "Fall In Love Tonight"* 45
• Gino & The Goons, *Shake It!* LP
• F.U.K., *"Roadkill" b/w "I Got a Head"* 45
• Cave Curse, *Future Dust* 12" 45

Rich Cocksedge

• Superchunk live at U.L.U. London, 05/29/18
• Wild Animals, *The Hoax* LP
• Irish Handcuffs,
Comfort in Distraction 10"
• Future Girls,
Motivation Problems
• Radon, *More of Their Lies* CD

Rosie Gonce

Top 5 Shows of May and June 2018
1. Western Addiction and Swingin' Utters at The Catalyst, Santa Cruz, 5/12/18
2. Genuine Parts, Modern Action, and The Briefs at Thee Parkside, SF, 5/19/18
3. A Giant Dog and Against Me! at UC Theatre, Berkeley, 5/25/18
4. The Subhumans at Metro Operahouse, Oakland, 6/2/18
5. Dirty Denim, DFMK, toyGuitar, and Nothington at Thee Parkside, SF, 6/9/18

Ryan Nichols

1. Ciudad Lineal, *El Nuevo Hombre* LP
2. Johnny Marr at the Teragram Ballroom
3. Poptone at Alex's Bar
4. Hot Snakes at The Observatory
5. Clive Davis, *The Soundtrack of My Life* (book)

Sal Lucci

1. Firestarter, *First Album* and *Livin' on the Heat* LPs
2. Real Kids, *The Kids 1974 Demos, The Real Kids 1977/78 Demos/Live at the Rat! January 22, 1978* LPs
3. Nerve Beats, *New Essentials* LP
4. Erik Nervous,
Assorted Anxieties LP
5. Various Artists, *Horrendous New Wave* LP

Sean Arenas

• Pretty Flowers,
Why Trains Crash LP
• Muscle Dungeon, *Beef Angel* 7"
• Breakfast In Silence, *It's Hard to be Open-Minded When You Wanna Die* CD
• Nopes, *Never Heard of It* LP
• MACHINEkit,
DYSAPPEARENCER LP

Sean Koepenick

Heavy Rotation
1. Fireburn, *Shine* 7"
2. The Avengers,
We Are the One 7"
3. The Avengers, *Teenage Rebel* 7"
4. The Avengers, *Paint It Black* 7"
5. Descendents, *Who We Are* 7"

Steve Adamyk

• Civic, *New Vietnam* 12"
• The Skids, *Crooked Cop* 7"
• The Living Eyes,
Modern Living LP
• Jimmy Vapid, *Night Moves* LP
• Bad Sports,
Open That Door 7"

Toby Chairmover

Top 5 Movies I Have Recently Enjoyed
1. *Good Manners*
2. *Ali Wong: Hard Knock Wife*
3. *San Francisco 2.0*
4. *Won't You Be My Neighbor?*
5. *Freeway: Crack in the System*

Todd Taylor

• Partial Traces, *Glass Beach* LP
• Maniac, *Dead Dance Club* LP
• The Brokedowns,
Sick of Space LP
• Hank Wood And The Hammerheads, Self-titled LP
• Firestarter,
Livin' on the Heat LP

Ty Stranglehold

1. No Problem,
Let God Sort Em Out
2. Maniac, *Dead Dance Club*
3. Hot Snakes, *Jericho Sirens*
4. Espectrostatic, *Curios*
5. Mind Spiders, *Furies*

RECORD REVIEWS

In my experience, this is not a record that's known for its mixed reviews. Pick it up, fall in love.

–Daryl

FIRESTARTER, *Livin' On the Heat* LP

ABOLITIONIST: ***The Instant:*** **CD**
Abolitionist is a band that I got into through this very zine. I think it's no secret that these guys dig Propagandhi a lot. I do too, but I have to be honest. I like this quite a bit more than the more metal output from the Winnipeg legends. Oddly enough, I am hearing some more obscure Canadian influences in the mix here too. I'm not sure exactly why that is, but I am reminded at times of Trigger Happy (of Toronto) and Furnaceface (of Ottawa) as well. I don't expect anyone to understand, but you should know that it is a big compliment coming from me. This album is getting a lot of play around here and I look forward to the chance I get to see them live. –Ty Stranglehold (1859, 1859records.bandcamp.com)

ABOLITIONIST: ***The Instant:*** **CD**
Ambitious project—this being a concept album that flips the world from one of self-absorbed callousness to one of compassion and caring, but there's a catch. There's always a catch. Interesting timing too, at this moment in time the U.S. is flipped upside down and thrown into a dark corner. What is here before us is the question of what if the world was ordered in a way that we thought of as just? Where being vegan was the norm, animal liberation was every day, and being conscientious of the world was a given? Would it just be a change for the same? Is it human to destroy utopias? Utilizing a mid-'80s Dischord style (the guitar tone reminds me of Michael Hampton from Embrace, SOA, One Last Wish) as the fuel, their sound is combined with an element of the present for combustion. The band incorporates peaks and valleys for maximum effect, where the message is of equal importance to presenting dynamic music for you to singalong and raise that fist to. –Matt Average (1859, 1859records.bandcamp.com)

ADACTA: ***ZLO:*** **LP**
Super lavish gatefold: embossed cover with an impaled wild boar's head from this longtime Slovakian band. Digging around in the entails of bands like Tragedy, From Ashes Rise, and Doom, but without any of the former's melody and hooks. It's a straight-ahead crust battering ram, which is just fine, but it doesn't have the mayhem of Swedish bands like Skitsystem, or any of the Motörpunk melody of Inepsy or Totalitar. The band's earlier releases had a female singer that was totally out of control like the Unhinged. This is just too paint-by-numbers for me. –Tim Brooks (PHR, phr.cz)

ADOLESCENTS: ***Cropduster:*** **LP**
There are "old" bands tapped into the punk nostalgia cottage industry that are content to earn a little Christmas money playing nothing but the oldies at the odd gig now and then, and there are the bands who prefer to still work at being a collective creative endeavor. The Adolescents not only fall into the latter category, they continue to be a vital voice in the underground while maintaining a consistent level of quality output that is a rarity even among newer bands, let alone one that's been plugging away at it at different intervals for nearly forty years. Much like their last effort, *Manifest Density*, things largely continue down a trajectory that adds a wee bit of "rock" to a trademark, influential hardcore punk template hardwired with dual-octave leads, devastating riffs, assorted tempos, and crack musicianship. Tony remains in fine form, howling out topical, pointed lyrics that address, and often dress down, the current demagogue-in-chief and the larger social (dis)order while Steve and the boys lay down one ripping musical base after another. The collective results here are a consistently strong, effective album, quite possibly the best they've dropped this decade. Nostalgia is fun in small doses, but, given the choice between the safety of a perpetual wallow in a static, unchanging past and supporting crucial work from vets who remain rooted in the reality of *right now*, I'm gonna go with the latter every single time. –Jimmy Alvarado (Concrete Jungle)

AGRRAVATED ASSAULT:
Early Yearz: **CD-R**
Three simple, sloppy (or at least that's how it sounds with the production) thrash tunes. There are little metal flourishes in the guitars, but the overall sound is early NY hardcore and, according to the hand-scrawled cover, some of the members were in Murphy's Law. –Jimmy Alvarado (No address listed)

ALICE BAG: ***Blueprint:*** **CD**
Okay, this is pretty great. *Blueprint* kicks right off into a shout-along anthem of an opener, "Turn It Up." The poppy keys are the perfect counter to Alice Bag's snarling vocals. Things take a turn for the soulful and subdued in "Invisible" before raging back into the riot grrrl banger "77" ("I make 77 cents and it's not right / It's bad for women and worse if you're not white"). Continuing along those lines, the rest of the album—Bag's second solo effort—is a marvel of genre-blending, from ska punk horn leads to funky grooves and jangly guitar hooks. Who else could pull so many sounds together so seamlessly into one album? *Blueprint* is a more than worthy new chapter in Alice Bag's ever-growing legacy in art and activism. –Indiana Laub (Don Giovanni)

ALICE BAG: ***Blueprint:*** **LP**
Alice returns with her second solo album and again knocks it outta the park. Here she and her cohorts deliver pointed, topical lyrics via a potent potpourri of pop, garage, funky soul, ballad, and, yes, punk. The rage that made Bags live performances so electric is still very much in evidence, precision-wielded with a focus that drops with contempt for ageist critics one minute and howls with righteous fury at the assorted indignities and injustices still meted upon marginalized communities. Much deeper than monotone rage-fest, threaded throughout are veins of effervescence, humor, and heartache amid buzzing guitars, buoyant horns, pianos, violins and slinky, pulsing rhythm sections. My personal Pick-to-Click is "Invisible," a gorgeous tune that tackles the somber subject of alcoholism with an avalanche of '60s-steeped hooks and pop savvy. No "sophomore slump" here, kids, just good rockin'. –Jimmy Alvarado (Don Giovanni, dongiovannirecords.com)

AUTOGRAMM:
"Jessica Don't Like Rock'N'Roll" b/w "Walk Don't Talk 2 Me": **7"**
When it comes to anything in the new wave/no wave realm, my criteria for appreciation tends to be the more synthesizer, the better. With that in mind, I can't help but be all about Autogramm. The A side track "Jessica Don't Like Rock'N'Roll," is everything you'd want from the genre, including plenty of synths, and some quirky lyrics with a little story. There's also a hint of almost '50s/'60s nostalgia in the plot of the lyrics, about a girl who used to be into rock'n'roll, but has since moved on, which I appreciated. The B side track "Walk Don't Talk 2 Me," is a clever reenvisioning of the Bryan Adams hit "Run to You," with a clever twist to the lyrics you'll have to listen to in order to appreciate. If you like your new music with a hint of nostalgia, look no further. –Paul J. Comeau (Snappy Little Numbers)

BABYLON: ***Back to the Brink:*** **7"**
Portland punk produced and mixed by Thee Slayer Hippy of Poison Idea. Very meaty and fast hardcore punk is what this band plays and it is rock solid. Anyone who remembers that killer Ritual Device LP from a few years back will wanna be all over this. It's got some seriously gruff and gnarly vocals over the top of ripping HC; a tried and true sound for a reason. –Mike Frame (Self-released, streetsofbabylon.com)

BACK TO BASICS: ***Shaded Eyes EP:*** **7"**
Secret Mission continues to bring incredible Japanese bands to turntables worldwide, with Back To Basics delivering two marvelous new tracks on this perfect single that self-describes as an EP. Hailing from Kyoto and featuring members of Louder and First Alert, this is definitive Japanese powerpop that's irresistible from the first listen. Only two hundred of these are available stateside, so make sure to swoop it up while you can. Secret Mission's momentum is on fire right now, with them churning out hit after hit. No one's throwing shade at *Shaded Eyes*! –Art Ettinger (Secret Mission)

BAD TIMES: ***Streets of Iron:*** **LP**
Bad Times was a one-off band that was comprised of a trio of influential garage punkers: Jay Reatard (The Reatards, Lost Sounds), Eric Oblivian (The Oblivians), and King Louie Bankston (Royal Pendletons, Missing Monuments). This is a reissue of their lone studio LP rebranded with the title *Streets of Iron*, and it's a good one, re-mastered and with a slightly different track listing. Musically, I can't really say there are any surprises here if you're familiar with the other bands these guys are associated with, as it's chock full of lo-fi snotty garage punk rock'n'roll. With the impressive list of really great bands that the members of this trio has been involved with, I can't say that this is my favorite thing that any of these guys put out, but it's still a fun listen and definitely worth checking out if you're unfamiliar. –Mark Twistworthy (Goner)

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BLANKZ, THE: *White Baby:* 7"
Cherry picking the most infectious parts of bands like Smogtown, The Consumers, and The Spits, The Blankz crank out two snotty, amped-up bangers on this EP. Fans of Hostage, early-2000s Dirtnap, or Modern Action Records should definitely look into this. If they can play as well as this record sounds, I bet they're blowing a band off the stage as you read this. Gritty lyrics, clean production, winning combo. –Daryl (Slope)

BLUES LAWYER: *Guess Work:* LP
Tales of love, crushes, and infatuation gone south presented via a mix of Messthetics and Flying Nun sounds at their best. Honest poetry of frustration and heartbreak that even the most emotionally cold can relate to—in the dark and alone of course. "Pretend" embodies that with: "I saw you in the street light, waiting on a car, you were right in front of me, but never seemed so far." Through all of this, musically and lyrically, there is a sublime quality that can not be denied. –Matt Average (Emotional Response)

BOMBPOPS, THE: *Dear Beer:* EP
The title track to this EP seesaws between craving social drinking with friends and pushing everyone away so the narrator can drink alone. I suppose it's a fairly common back and forth fight with your own brain, which is pretty evident in the lines: "I'm so sick of drinking by myself / No one likes a fucking downer." Then they also say they hate their friends, but they're too lazy to get new ones. So it's a bit of apathy with a side of social anxiety—which is not always paired well with alcohol—though it definitely always wants to hang out when you're bummed. Listening to "Dear Beer" makes me think a lot of Dillinger Four's "Fruity Pebbles," which used to be my go-to song for drinking alone. At first listen, I really didn't like this EP very much. It's super polished and everything is perfectly on point. Not a hair out of place. It definitely put me off at first because it's so sugary and calculated pop punk. But the more I sit with it, much like passing time with a pint and your own thoughts, it starts to become more familiar and enjoyable. It's certainly got a producer's touch all over the tunes, though I know that's not always a bad thing. I even kinda enjoy "Polluted Skies" for reminding me what it's like to live in L.A.—too hot to keep your windows closed, yet too fucking loud to keep them open at night. If you like super saccharine, innocuous pop punk (who are not the female version of TBR! I get so sick of seeing that comparison!), pick this one up. Maybe even get it put into the jukebox at your favorite dive for those nights you're drinking alone. –Kayla Greet (Fat)

BRAIN TRAPS:
***Hobo Cobra Action Tracks:* LP**
I'm pretty sure I've reviewed Brain Traps before, I don't believe they've made it out to the U.S. and they're not a well-known band outside of Cologne, Germany, however I know I've heard them before. With all of the lo-fi garage that graces my turntable (the good, the bad, and the ugly) Brain Traps does have a signature sound. It's super catchy, and easily danceable, like early Black Lips trash garage. *Hobo Cobra Action Tracks* is at worst an easy listen, and at best a true fist pumper... depending on your mood, of course. With six songs though, I wonder why a 12". I know that 7"s don't sell, but ya know, I'm all about efficiency… but I'll let it slide. –Camylle Reynolds (Stencil Trash)

BRUISER QUEEN: *Heavy High:* 12" LP
Bruiser Queen is undoubtedly one of St. Louis' best kept secrets. They consistently revive the most critical elements found in the best female-fronted acts of '90s and '60s. A little gritty, a little poppy, strong vocals, and guitar that replaces bass. I don't often let the last one slide, but I do for Sleater-Kinney and Bruiser Queen. This album kicks off with "Sugar High," and it should come as no surprise that the track itself reflects the theme of the lyrics: find a way to coat the rough times in all the good you can find. It continues on with strong, upbeat, pop/garage rock tracks for most of the album, but things do take a turn for a slower in the second half. I'm not sure this is where Bruiser Queen shines but vocalist Morgan Nusbaum can certainly carry a track with little instrumentation. Standout tracks: "Telepathic Mind" and "Teenage Fire." –Nicole X (Certified PR, thickbootyhos@yahoo.com)

CHARNEL GROUND: Self-titled: 12" LP
Charnel Ground is a N.Y.-based noise rock supergroup of sorts. It's instrumental, it's good. If you need something less aggro than Pelican but not as chill as Pinback, Charnel Ground is a good bet. Might as well skip "Playa La Ticla" (about fourteen minutes in) which brings a surfy, Spanish-inspired, twist that just doesn't fit. –Nicole X (12XU)

CHESTY MALONE AND THE SLICE 'EM UPS: *We're Still Dead!:* LP
Kinda metal-laced horror punk stuff. Even at fifteen years old, I probably wouldn't have dug songs like "Show 'Em the Snake" or "Gorilla Girl from Outer Space," but then again I unflinchingly loved both Gwar and the Accüsed back then, so who knows. Anyway, an LP's worth of silly, quasi-questionable songs about monsters and madhouses and robbing old ladies, all with an unabashed metallic thread running throughout that doesn't quite hit me in the feels or the fun-zone a few decades later. The band logo incorporates a zombie woman with huuuuuge breasts and a pair of butcher knives, and that's pretty indicative of the album as a whole. Lead singer's moniker is Jaqueline Blownaparte, which is maybe one of the best punk names ever, but all in all, I gotta give this one a pass. –Keith Rosson (Wrecked)

CHOKE THE POPE: *Who Cares:* CS
Godamnit, this band is fantastic. In just a year, I went from blindly reviewing their last cassette, seeing them live a bunch, and then totally falling in love with them. Their songs are deftly satirical and brutally honest. They cover things like rehab in "Milam High" ("You can study or you can fuck off / I've never met so many sober jerkoffs"), AA in "Depression and Cigarettes" ("I'm struggling to pay the rent / But all my money has been spent on quick fixes and paranoia"), and how they feel about people sucked into their phones on "Must Be Nice" ("When I see somebody Snapchatting at a show it makes me go "Oh no, what an asshole" / Just live your life!"). They branch out in some nice ways musically also. "Bad News" is a fuzzed-out slow jam, while "Depression and Cigarettes" is a somewhat bluesy tune. I also love that there's a song titled "Fuck You," directly followed by one called "Fuck Me." Everything on this record is so fucking catchy and wonderful. The jangly guitar comes through sharply, the bass rumbles along in the low end, the drums are always on point, and the vocals are much like talking to a good friend, but one who can carry a tune with attitude. Easily a top contender for album of the year for me. This rules. –Kayla Greet (Den Tapes, dentapes@gmail.com)

CINDERBLOCK: *The Executioner:* 7"
Slightly faster (and cleaner) than normal street/pogo punk from Massachusetts. Some members did time in the hype machine Who Killed Spikey Jacket (but this band does not feature the Ancient Aliens guy). If you're a fan of that band, it's probably worth your time to look this one up. There's a little bit more of a hardcore edge to this but, on a whole, it's pretty straight forward for the style. Bonus points for a total lack of embarrassing lyrics, all of which are pretty barbed attacks against punks who refuse to take critical looks at themselves when talking about accountability. –Ian Wise (Loud Punk, loudpunk.com)

CIVIC: *New Vietnam:* 12" EP
It seems Australia can do no wrong. Just the mention of that country alone when it comes to music will spark conversation, and it doesn't seem anyone can identify the crux of the quality of art originating there, but it exists nonetheless. Civic is no exception to the rule. Somehow, a band that's existed for barely six months as this review is being written has unleashed a monster of an EP, turning heads almost instantly. From the opening of "Nuclear Son," you'll know precisely what you're getting into. Names tossed around by most you'll hear are Dead Boys, Saints (obviously), and while those aren't inaccurate per se, they don't properly define their sound at all. Civic have a real underbelly to them, similar to what you'd get out of a Hank Wood And The Hammerheads record. The vocals even remind me of some of the less screamy Impalers songs. Combine those references and add a few well-placed chaotic guitar solos and that will likely describe them best. There's so much grit to them that referencing any other "rock" band would make them sound corny, which would be the furthest from the truth. A near-perfect record, with "Shackled Man" and "Burning Steel" being tops for me. –Steve Adamyk (Anti Fade, antifaderecords.bandcamp.com)

CIVIC: *New Vietnam:* CD
If the title track of this record doesn't give you a kick in the pants and get you rocking and rolling, then please find a medical professional to check your pulse and maybe your ears too. This band cranks out seven quality tunes which do just enough to lay down a marker as to its Australian roots through moments when it sounds like The Celibate Rifles and The Saints. I'm not sure what it is in the blood of the Aussies but they certainly know how to whip up a crazy storm with drums, a few guitars, and a microphone, with Civic being the new kids on the block. This is dirty punk'n'roll done to an extremely high standard. –Rich Cocksedge (Anti Fade, antifaderecords.bigcartel.com)

CLEVELAND STEAMERS, THE: *Best Record Ever:* LP
Was kinda ready, based on the cover art and band name, for a sorta rock/punk kinda thing. What I got instead was a heady mix of psych, goth, punk-wave and rippin' Midwestern rock'n'roll. The ingredients might seem a bit far-flung, but they pull it off in spades, deftly mixing all of 'em while keeping the whole thing together with well crafted songs. "Best record ever?" Well, that sorta shit is subjective, but this record *is* pretty goddamned great, sometimes jaw-droppingly so. –Jimmy Alvarado (Smog Veil)

COLOUR ME WEDNESDAY: *Counting Pennies in the Afterlife:* LP/CD
Colour Me Wednesday makes me so happy, as its members have a knack for writing songs that can be uplifting and make me shake an angry fist at the world all within the same sentence. The band has taken its indie pop approach and added a bit of an edge to it. A lot of this comes from Harriet Doveton's guitar, which has always been a focal point for me and nothing has changed here. Likewise, lyrically, the Doveton sisters continue to write biting lyrics of a personal and socio-political nature, too. There are not many things better than witnessing a band making all-round improvements when one was already pleased with what they were doing—and that's the case for me here. –Rich Cocksedge (Doveton / KROD)

COME HOLY SPIRIT: *Asters and Disasters:* LP
I am not surprised to read that founding member of The Ex, G.W. Sok, contributes vocals on two tracks on this record because this record immediately brings The Ex to mind. Specifically, I'm reminded of the material that The Ex recorded in the

’90s collaborating with cellist Tom Cora, as those records incorporated a lot of traditionally “non-punk” aspects and influences into the songs while still landing firmly within the radius of The Ex’s anarcho punk roots. This LP is similar in that it’s seemingly cut from that same mold. There are songs with obvious folk music influence and there are songs with dirgey experimental guitar work that also brings to mind Dog Faced Hermans (whose guitarist also played on those records where The Ex teamed up with Tom Cora) while some other parts of this left me thinking of everything from Diamanda Galas to PJ Harvey to Crass. This record manages to coherently bring all of these wide-ranging influences together while not at all sounding exactly like any of them. The Ex has been a longtime favorite of mine, and so I really shouldn’t be shocked that I cannot seem to take this record off my turntable. Highly recommended. –Mark Twistworthy (Water Wing, waterwingrecords.com)

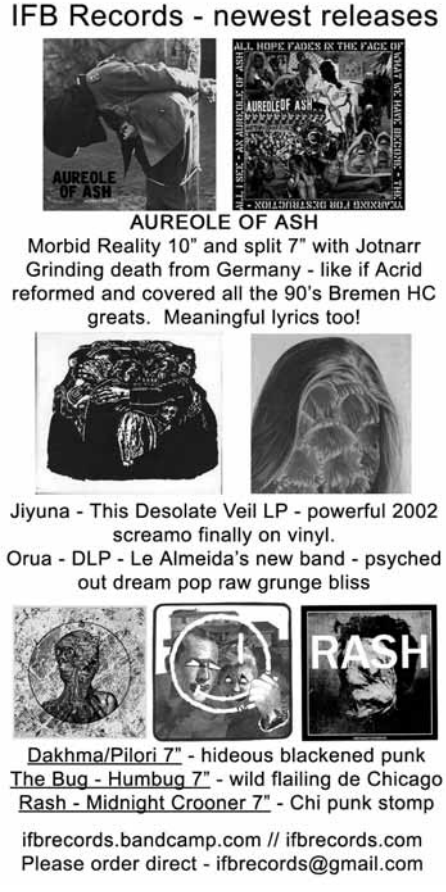
CONTROL TEST:
***Verdadero Criminal:* 7" EP**
Synthpunk with nary the “pop” sensibilities of obvious predecessors like the Screamers or Units. Largely mid-tempo, aggressive, and abrasive. –Jimmy Alvarado (Iron Lung)

CREEPS, THE: *Beneath the Pines:* LP
When I first heard this collection of songs, admittedly I was looking for something a bit darker. Something a bit more Creeps-y? Yeah, I love *Eulogies* so much that I kind of wanted *Pines* to be a repeat of that. But after my third or fourth time through the record, once I started to know the words to all the songs and the tone of each track, it really grew on me. Sonically, this record is much brighter and sharper than their last, but the subject matter is just as grim. “Full Shook” is about Skottie’s grandmother suffering a stroke, though even without that context the lyrics: “I just picture a scared old woman trapped behind her eyes / Full shook, tongue tied,” still resonate hard with me. There are ones about long-term relationships in “Even,” depression and sadness in “Low,” and the fear of dying in “Scared.” Where *Eulogies* was more of a bleakly beautiful record, *Pines* is the yin to The Creeps’ yang, which is beautifully bleak. The song “Shimmer” is aptly titled, as you can hear the cymbals reverberate and ripple throughout, and it’s a very nice way to set up the record. If you don’t catch all the lyrics as you make your way though this latest effort, it might not hit very hard. But once I spent some more time with Skottie’s incredible voice, the darkness of *Beneath the Pines* comes through in droves. Each song has just enough despondency, fright, and uncertainty to make me cry. And each one is pretty enough to do so while smiling a bit. Fantastic record. –Kayla Greet (It’s Alive)

CREEPS, THE: *Old Crimes:* LP
It’s Alive has collected The Creeps’ three EPs, one split, and single (2009-2013) onto one easy-to-manage long player. Rather difficult for me to review, as words will fall insufficient to my feelings on Skottie’s voice. Since blindly ordering Crusades first LP, his pipes provide a dark melody that really does something for me. I jumped on the Creeps as soon as I realized they were a more Skottie-centric goth pop outlet for his vocal stylings (versus the more serious leanings of Crusades). Every Creeps release makes me feel like the interior sleeve photo of this one: a sea of raised fists and undoubtedly open mouths. Essential. –Matt Seward (It’s Alive)

CRIMINAL CODE:
***Twenty-Five, Thirty-Four:* LP**
Tacoma’s Criminal Code return with their first record in several years, following a steady stream of well-received releases. Absence makes the heart grow fonder. And while this is still the Crim Code we all know and love, there is plenty on *Twenty-Five, Thirty-Four* to reassert why they’re one of the best bands from the Pacific Northwest. The rhythm section is still as tight as ever. The drumming doesn’t miss a beat. The guitar tones still stay with you for days after listening. The vocals flex some talented range previously unheard. I’m detecting an affinity for Wipers’ *Over the Edge* but also the Cure’s *Disintegration*: I ain’t mad at ya, Crim Code. Whatever you do, don’t miss these cats if they’re touring through your town, and pick this record up while you’re at it. You shan’t be disappointed. –Juan Espinosa (Deranged)

DAGGERMOUTH: *Turf Wars:* LP
Youth crew is the music that happens when pop punk and hardcore intersect, right? Do you have to be super posi, from the late ’80s, and straight edge? I don’t know if Daggermouth abstains from substances, though the substance of their lyrics is super bro-y, loyal, and tough. They’re inspired by 7 Seconds, but hang out more with Comeback Kid instead of the Youth Of Today. It’s singsong-y, gang vocals with heavy snare, and pretty similar guitar hooks throughout. Honestly, I had never spent much time listening to this Canadian four piece, but I knew the name had been around for a while. When I put this record on, I was surprised to discover how young of a band they still sounded. And then I found out this was a ten-year anniversary reissue. Whoops! Well, all your favorite songs about community and family are presented here in all their tough guy glory. As far as I can tell, there are neither additions nor subtractions from this version besides the fact that the vinyl is a picture disc, which is pretty cool. However, when selecting images for a picture disc, why is it so often the front and back of the record sleeve? We already have that as a rectangle. I don’t think we need it as a circle too! Fun fact: one of these guys is a professional wrestler now. I think I’m more interested in that than his band. –Kayla Greet (Little Rocket)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The Bug - Humbug 7" - wild flailing de Chicago
Rash - Midnight Crooner 7" - Chi punk stomp
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DAMNED, THE: *Evil Spirits:* LP
One always needs to get their grain of salt ready when taking on a new album from one of the classic punk bands, especially when they haven't released anything new in at least a decade or so. I went out of my way to avoid hearing any of this before I picked up the album. I saw them live for the first time just last year and I was blown away, which resulted in me having high hopes for this record. Take a deep breath and put the needle on the record… I love it! This is some classic Damned! To be fair, I feel it has a healthy dose of Naz Nomad And The Nightmares in the mix (The Damned side project where they released an album of '60s pop covers), but in the end, it is unmistakably The Damned. Dave Vanian's voice does not age, and I think he may actually be a vampire after all. If you're expecting *Damned Damned Damned* or *Machine Gun Etiquette* you will be disappointed, but remember that the band who recorded those records has had forty years to continue to evolve. It is safe to say that The Damned can still write and perform a punk/goth/pop/rock song with the best of them and that makes me incredibly happy today. –Ty Stranglehold (Spinefarm)

DARK BLACK: *New Lows: 7"*
Splitting the difference between goth, shoegaze, and indie pop, this band very much lives up to their moniker on the A side of this single. The flip is a little more reserved and reverb-drenched, with a real 4AD records kinda feel to it. Good stuff for fans of dark pop music. This band will be one to watch. –Mike Frame (Running In Place)

DARK BLUE:
"Fight to Love" b/w "For You": 7"
"DON'T LET THE SCUM CATCH YOU CRYING," proclaims the back cover of Dark Blue's latest 7". This statement raises a few questions. Who are the "scum," why am I crying, and what will happen if they do catch me? Don't expect any answers on this two-song 7". Side A's "Fight to Love" is a Brit pop ballad with shimmering guitars and syrupy baritone vocals delivered by crooner John Sharkey III. Sharkey is supported by stalwarts Andrew Nelson (Ceremony, Paint It Black) and Michael Sneeringer (Puerto Rico Flowers). Side B boasts a six-minute rendition of Anti-Nowhere League's "For You." It overstays its welcome to say the least. Unlike previous Dark Blue releases that cherry picked a range of stimulating sounds from Slowdive and The Jesus And Mary Chain, the mid-tempo pace and languid vocals of this 7" made me nod off rather than nod my head. It must be said, however, that Jeff Zeigler's production is warm and comforting, like a blanket made of sound. –Sean Arenas (12XU)

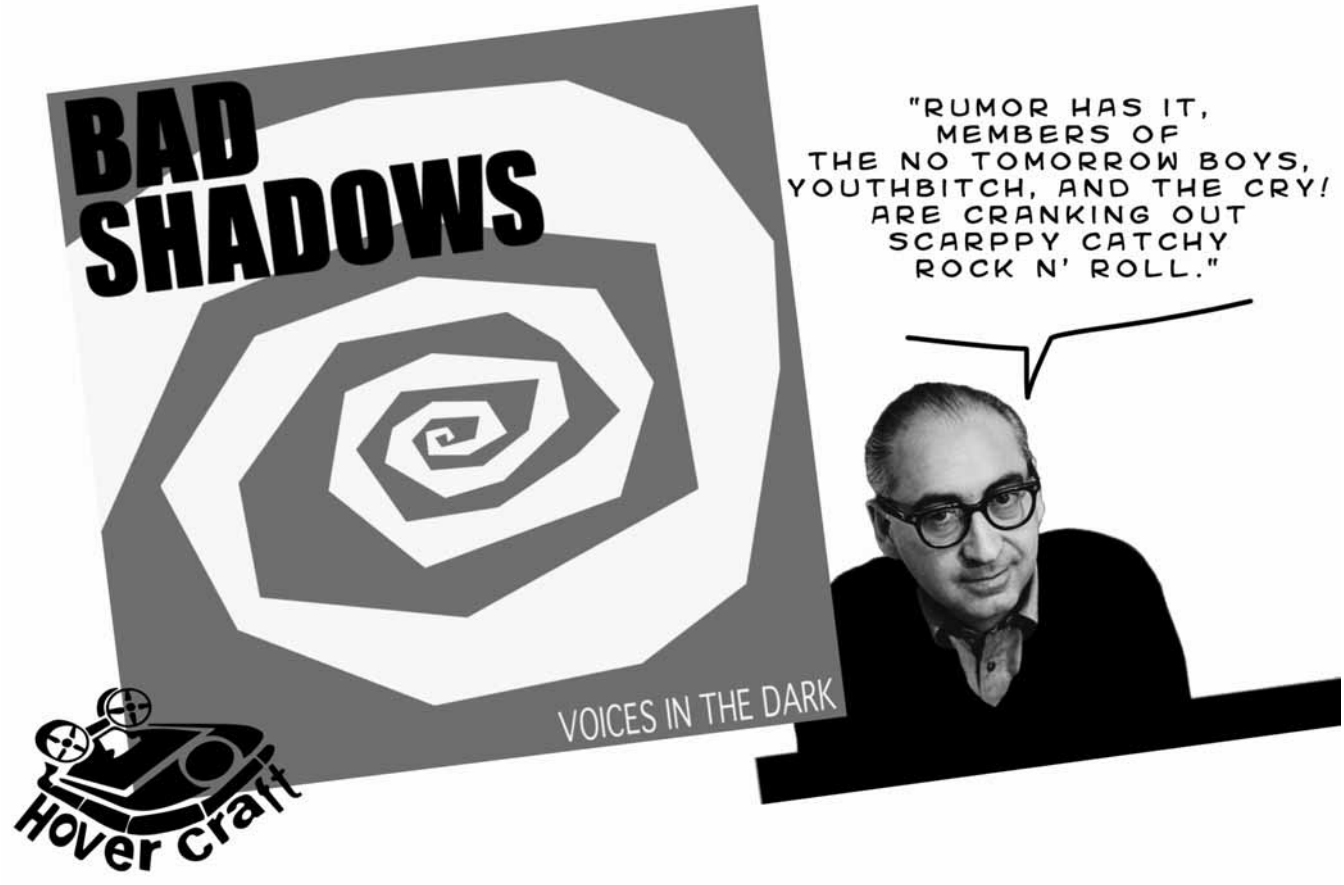
DARKLANDS: *Hate It Here:* LP
A trio from Providence, R.I. that actually sounds much bigger here. Sifting through the undercurrents are bands like Ride and Swervedriver. But don't forget newer bands like The Life And Times, too. Throw them all in a blender and you may get a taste of what Darklands brings to the party. "See You Soon" has a slinky bass line that will pull you in quickly. "Like a House on Fire" smolders until you are just left with ringing in your ears. A good ringing. –Sean Koepenick (Atomic Action!, atomicactions@gmail.com)

DEAD CELLS: *2018 Demo:* CS
Relentless and jittery and echoey punk that kind of floored me. Some pretty interesting color and character in the guitars. This is the kind of thing that can sound generic so easily, but Dead Cells never sound typical—just familiar and knowing in all the good ways. If anyone's making a movie or TV show about punks and want a real band to play in a scene, I would maybe call these guys. –Matt Werts (Neon Taste)

DEAD MEADOW:
***The Nothing They Need:* LP**
Dead Meadow have traversed the world for twenty years wielding a unique and warbly style of psych/fuzz metal. The music is masterfully layered for a trio: heavy reverb with wavering distortion creates a hot wave allowing you to rock and stare at the sky at the same time. I know everyone has their pet bands, but it truly confounds me that this group doesn't get talked about even a little more than they do considering how long they've been plugging away. If I had to guess, I'd say they might be a little too psych for the metal scene, a little too experimental for the retro scene, and a little too spacey for the rockers. It's a shame this band falls through the cracks of the styles they celebrate so successfully. "Keep Your Head" starts the album with an ascending guitar and underwater vocals. The song layers into "Here with the Hawk," a more standard '60s rocker that deconstructs into metallic blues picking that becomes "I'm So Glad." The album continues on this wave of uncontrived '60s madness. They're definitely not a singles band. I get that. It's for album people. I hate people who preach bands at me as well, but I feel there's a whole audience missing this. This album is for the firewatchers and people who have long drives to see Sleep. –Billups Allen (Xemu, xemu.com)

DEATH RIDGE BOYS: Self-titled: CS
Demo quality recording of seven songs of political punk from this Portland, Ore. band. The sound is very much a mix of hardcore punk with some real rawk style leads in the guitar playing. Very gruff vocal style and the anthemic choruses give this a very Electric Frankenstein feel in places for an interesting mix of styles. –Mike Frame (WHMH)

DIE HOFFNUNG:
***Elegies and Creation Songs:* LP**
Recorded but unreleased following the suicide of band member Travis Fristoe in 2015, *Elegies and Creation Songs*, Die Hoffnung's second album, is finally seeing the light of day. Nuanced, emotive, yearning,


BAD SHADOWS
VOICES IN THE DARK
"RUMOR HAS IT, MEMBERS OF THE NO TOMORROW BOYS, YOUTHBITCH, AND THE CRY! ARE CRANKING OUT SCARPPY CATCHY ROCK N' ROLL."
Hover Craft

raw, furious, intricate—it's an album masterfully aware of the loud/quiet dynamics of screamo, a genre that Fristoe and brothers Jon and Jim Marburger had plenty of experience in, given their previous bands. Incredible lyrics and beautifully packaged with white vinyl in a silkscreened chipboard cover, it includes an accompanying CD by bandmate Jim Marburger, *Songs for Travis,* which tackles—presumably—issues surrounding Fristoe's death, and proves to be as haunting and powerful as *Elegies,* albeit done in a totally different style. In many ways, I feel pretty ill-equipped to review something that is so clearly a labor of love for all those involved, but I will say that everything here is beautifully rendered and manages to be both fierce as shit and resolutely haunting. Regardless of the issues surrounding its release, *Elegies* is a striking, memorable piece of music. –Keith Rosson (Belladonna)

DIGITAL LEATHER:
Headache Heaven: **CS**
One-man synth deviance that sounds kind of like The Normal braining the Silicon Teens with a well-chromed tire iron (and if you're wondering how that could even happen, given that The Normal and the Silicon Teens were all just the same one guy, you're not alone), or maybe a basement party post-heel-turn Flock Of Seagulls. There's twenty-one songs on here, few of which are particularly short, so expect to experience the full spectrum of that which the horny, dark, and arty have to offer. BEST SONG: I think it was "To Make You Stay?" BEST SONG TITLE: "Another Sunrise in the City of Green Decay." FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: This cassette is green. –Rev. Nørb (No Coast)

DODGES, THE: ***Roll With:*** **CD**
In the bigger picture, the explosion of poppier, melodic punk bands in the '90s gets a bad rap. Sure, the success of bands like Blink-182 brought a glut of clones racing for record deals, but there were other, amazing bands like Whatever…, 30 Foot Fall, and Pinhead Circus that were still kicking ass in the underground. I feel like The Dodges would be out there playing with those bands. As far as I can tell they are a relatively new band, but I'll be damned if this doesn't take me back to my carefree early to mid-twenties. I will definitely be on the lookout for more from these dudes. –Ty Stranglehold (La Escalera)

DOWN AND OUTS: ***Double Negative:*** **LP**
I didn't realise that this was actually the band's fifth album when it got sent to me. I was happily working on the notion that the oft-quoted "difficult third album" syndrome had been blown apart with *Double Negative*, a record resplendent with great songs, singalong choruses as big as skyscrapers, and a fantastic guitar sound adding so much more than a bunch of chords to the songs. If you like upbeat and punchy, then you'll find it here. If you like scathing social commentary, then that will be found within the lyrics, especially on the poignant "You Can Have This Country Back," featuring the excellent line, "Went to sleep in Great Britain, woke up in Little England," a nod to the small mindedness of those clamoring for Brexit. The added plus side of this release is that there are two more Down And Outs albums for me to "discover" with no difficult third album blip, either! –Rich Cocksedge (All In Vinyl, allinvinyl.com)

DREW SMITH: ***Bullshit Rehash:*** **EP**
This record contains Burn Burn Burn tracks, the band for which Drew Smith is the singer and main songwriter for. As someone who has known Drew since before he started Burn some eight years ago, I've heard these tracks a billion times—but never like this. Each song is stripped down, delivered at almost half the speed, and has added instrumentation like keys, glockenspiel, and chord organ. He says in the liner notes that this record is a way of putting some old songs to rest and moving on as he continues to make major positive changes in his life. There's definitely an innate sweetness in hearing these tracks on an acoustic with Drew's voice sometimes cracking over the long-held notes. For someone who is typically screaming these same words over a five piece band, I really appreciate the rawness of his singing voice. Though I've seen Drew perform acoustic shows, as well as heard him working on new songs in the garage of our old shared punk house, he never sounded quite as open and vulnerable as he does on this EP. So while the liner notes joke about how you may have bought the same songs twice if you're a Burn Burn Burn fan, I'd argue these are completely new in this format. I do hope he does some more solo work in the future. –Kayla Greet (Tiny Dragon)

DUKE NUKEM: Self-titled: LP
Russian groove metal with a singer that sounds like he's been listening to a lot of G.I.S.M. in his spare time. –Jimmy Alvarado (SPHC, sphc.bigcartel.com)

DUMB VISION:
A Total Commitment to Evil: **CS**
I hear potential in Madison's Dumb Vision but it's hard to hold onto the snippets since this sounds like I'm wearing earplugs while listening to Misfits being played underwater. If that's your thing, go for it. –Nicole X (Rare Plant)

ELECTRO HIPPIES:
Collected Works 1985-1987: **CD**
A collection of odds 'n' ends from this short-lived band that influenced many hyper-thrash and grindcore bands that followed. Included are sixty tracks culled from the *Play Fast Or Don't* split with Generic, a Peel session, their first two demos, and assorted live and rehearsal recordings spanning the titular years. Sound quality varies based on the professionalism of the recordings, but all are at worst listenable. –Jimmy Alvarado (Boss Tuneage)

ELEPHANT RIFLE: *Hunk:* LP
Holy fuck! This record grabs you right by the privates from the get-go. The opener, "Hunk's America," is like a boxing warm-up for a Tyson fight of a record. It's no secret that I love this band and this record is my favorite so far. They have tapped into what they do best and carried it throughout the whole record: aggressive and witty vocals backed by moxie, and artistic, ballsy music. Also album cover of the year goes to *Hunk*. You'll have to apply yourself to see what I mean. –Ryan Nichols (Humanterrorist)

ELWAY: *For the Sake of the Bit:* CD
Elway sounds to me at times of early, *Grippe*-era Jawbox, and at others like twenty-first century melodic punk. The lyrical content is consistent with that pigeon-holing, as it shimmies towards the thoughtful and introspective. So, that makes this a solid record to me. Yet I wasn't sure I liked the name for a while—a Fort Collins band calling themselves Elway would be like a band from Manitowoc calling themselves Favre. But then I read that seven years ago John Elway himself asked them to stop using the name, and they issued a wonderfully understated fuck-you to him. I now approve of their name and wish them much glory. –The Lord Kveldulfr (Red Scare)

ELYSIAN: Self-titled: 7" EP
Aggressive goth/post-punk reminiscent of prime Xmal Deutschland. Maybe a smidge more depth to the overall production would've added impact, but as it stands they've got the sound down pat and the tunes to keep the listener engaged. –Jimmy Alvarado (Saudade)

EUREKA CALIFORNIA: *Roadrunners:* CD
I'm sitting in my Oakland, Calif. home when Athens' Eureka California references Morrissey and Kroger in the same breath in opening track "MKUltra." I'm suddenly feeling like time and place are weird constructs. On that note, we're clearly in full '90s ('80s college rock) revival right now, right? I'm happy with that if it means more stuff like this. It's like Thurston Moore didn't ruin Sonic Youth and also they let Juliana Hatfield join on guitar on a really fuzzy/aggressive day—sorry but there's no bass so I guess Kim isn't there, but that's okay for the first time ever. Standout tracks: "I Can't Look in Yr Direction" and "Mexican Coke." –Nicole X (HHBTM)

FETISH: *Take the Knife:* 7"
When members of both Poison Idea and Long Knife get together, some ear-splitting mischief is afoot. The title track takes much from the *War All the Time* period of PI and delivers a withering stunner of a tune that thrashes with the same fire that fuels Long Knife's endeavors. The flipside is a cover of Love's "A House Is Not a Motel" that's surprisingly effective. Looking forward to whatever long-player may be in the works. –Jimmy Alvarado (Beach Impediment)

FINAL EXIT / SEDEM MINÚT STRACHU: Split: 7"
Final Exit is unlike anything I've ever heard before (except for maybe Anal Cunt, but I've spent much of my adult life trying to *un*-hear A.C.). They describe themselves as "funny grind," but I genuinely think they missed an opportunity by not going with "goofy grind." The Japanese two-piece blasts through five songs in less than five minutes, jumping from nutso screeches to cheesy pop rock riffs. It's always weird, spastic, and never boring. Slovakia's Sedem Minút Strachu, on the other hand, is pure noise. It's possible their nearly six-minute contribution was recorded on a single Motorola Backflip: the guitar is blown-out and the drum kit is so tinny it might as well be aluminum cans. On the plus side, their cover art boasts a tough-as-fuck picture of Cliff Burton with the words "Hail Cliff! Fuck Riffs!" Amen. –Sean Arenas (SPHC)

FIRE HEADS: Self-titled: CD
Insidious little fucker, this is. To the casual listener this'll likely sound like occasionally zippy punk with maybe a wee bit o' garage mixed in. Those paying attention, however, will notice much going on below the waterline—stinger leads, driving delivery, smart lyrics, and a bit more sophistication in the writing than may be in evidence on the surface while still maintaining a pummeling foothold in the "punk" paradigm. Thumbs way up here. –Jimmy Alvarado (Big Neck)

FIRESTARTER: *First Album:* LP
This twentieth anniversary vinyl rerelease of the classic debut Firestarter LP features new vinyl mastering by Jeff Burke and Mark Ryan of the Marked Men. It's already sold out, but is still floating out there from some distributors. For the uninitiated, Firestarter formed from the ashes of Teengenerate and played some of the catchiest powerpop of all time. Along with the reissue of their other LP, *First Album* is truly essential. –Art Ettinger (Secret Mission)

FIRESTARTER: *Livin' on the Heat:* LP
After spending a decade telling every friend en route to Japan to pick up a copy of *Livin' on the Heat* if they see it, I'm finally holding this record thanks to the good people at Secret Mission. Absolute classic modern power pop. No debate, no discussion, it's all on the table here. After Teengenerate disbanded in 1996, 3/4ths of the band started Firestarter, transcending from garage trash perfection to power pop precision. In my experience, this is not a record that's known for its mixed reviews. Pick it up, fall in love, and get the first LP too. –Daryl (Secret Mission)

FIRESTARTER: *Livin' on the Heat:* LP
This reissue of the second Firestarter album, originally recorded and mixed in 2002 and 2003, is a must for fans of Japanese punk and powerpop. Along with Secret Mission's new edition of Firestarter's first album, this record is

a solid reminder that Teengenerate's alumni went on to bands at least as vital as the one they remain the most famous for. Unnervingly good, Firestarter is well-deserving of rediscovery. –Art Ettinger (Secret Mission)

F.U.K.:
***"Road Kill"* b/w *"I Got a Head":* 7"**
Archival 1977 wailing from a one-shot Detroit band, featuring future Mission Of Burma shaver Roger Miller (presumably best known for his song "You Can't Reach for Your Revolver in a Buffalo Herd"). The A side is a female-sung head-cleaver that is simultaneously tight and all over the place, reminiscent of some sort of Dark Fastbacks at their fastest, interspersed with flipped-out guitar bits that almost reach the level of The Mad's lunatic saxophone playing in the Blow Your Fucking Mind department. The B side is Roger playing all the instruments and fails to captivate me in parallel measure. BEST SONG: "Road Kill." BEST SONG TITLE: "I Got a Head." FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: The band's one show was on Halloween, 1977. –Rev. Nørb (Hozac)

GALLERY NIGHT: *Color TV:* 7"
Internet-reticent noise-groove enigma Gallery Night recorded what could have been an album's worth of tracks, but decided to release three 7"s on three different labels on the same day. Members of Baseball Furies, Tyrades, and more crashing your good vibes with thumping AmRep-crusted vitriol. Will be seeking out the other two releases based on the incredible strength, and many spins given, of this release. –Matt Seward (Dusty Medical)

GALLERY NIGHT:
***I Want to Die Here:* 7" EP**
Big sound noise rock—loud, dissonant, abrasive, rhythmic. This type of stuff can go south quick, but they maintain a high level of engagement and quality throughout the three tracks here. –Jimmy Alvarado (Big Neck)

GALLERY NIGHT: Self-titled: 7"
Gallery Night is the latest endeavor by Jim Hollywood—a guy who has spent time in garagey punk bands like the Baseball Furies, The Tyrades, and Football (among others). This new thing kind of takes him in a different direction from the spastic garage punk rock'n'roll that he's been pumping out for the last twenty years. While the three songs here are decidedly less garage rock sounding than some of his previous bands, this is definitely still punk, instead taking some influence from post-punk influences resulting in a focused, darker, and menacing style offering. –Mark Twistworthy (Tall Pat)

GELD: *Perfect Texture:* 12" EP
Geld let loose with a hellacious sound that wallops the listener from head to toe. Massive drums rumble over an evil-sounding guitar squall (courtesy of Cormac Sheehan, ex-Krömosom—easily one of the best guitar players in punk) that rips open the very fabric of the universe, allowing all that is unholy to come through for the ride as Geld rolls over the blown-out wasteland without remorse or mercy. Cling in futility to your cross if you must, the end is nigh, and Geld are the sonic death dealers ushering it all forward. Ten songs of oblivion and disgust. –Matt Average (Iron Lung)

GEN POP: *II:* 7" EP
Olympia punkers dance along dissonant and catchy, arty, and hardcore with tunes that zip by and/or ratchet up the "quirk" factor to fifteen or so. The centerpiece is easily "Plastic Comb," which broods in a trebly post-punk burn with brief passages of double-time interspersed throughout. Fans of the Urinals, Dïat, and Rhino 39 would do well to take note. –Jimmy Alvarado (Feel It)

GIANT HAYSTACKS:
***This Is All There Is:* CD**
My favorite bands are the kind who progress with every release. It's the sign of a band that is alive, breathing, and driven by desire. Giant Haystacks began heavy-on-the-Minutemen spice, but soon after started crafting their own recipe. While the San Pedro Three were always at the base, by the end Giant Haystacks sounded more like Giant Haystacks. In the span of nineteen songs (all taken from their singles and EPs), you can hear what I'm getting at. The Minutemen sound shifted into more of a post-punk sound akin to Gang Of Four and Wire. They hit perfection by the time they released "Young Shaver." Such a great song! –Matt Average (Mistake)

GINO AND THE GOONS: *Rip It Up:* LP
Garage rock reeking with swagger and attitude that rivals the greats of that scene's "Budget Rock" era. Sound is raw without being annoyingly so, and the tunes rock'n'roll with a slink and skank that all but demands yer bag o' bones wiggle about. –Jimmy Alvarado (Gino And The Goons, ginoandthegoons@gmail.com)

GLVIS: Self-titled: LP
This is a handmade, lo-fi, avant-garde record. In the same way Wesley Willis had an off-hand style, Glvis delivers an honest, rough-around-the-edges brand of acoustic songs. –Ryan Nichols (Owlsnest, ericmildew@gmail.com)

GOLDEN BOYS, THE:
***Better Than Good Times:* LP**
This is a thoughtful, uncategorizable record with a tinge of the better things coming out in the '90s. The title track is very slamming with rising, sonically punchy guitars framing the chorus. "Dear Work" pushes forward similarly with a solid sentiment of slacker attitude in tow. The album mixes in some slower material. "Rattle On" is a mid-tempo slinker with good keyboard. I don't know if the '90s are making a comeback, or if that's what the influence here is, but before there was internet I used to listen to '90s alternative radio and sit through the

dreck, waiting for the better songs to come on. This album reminds me of the better songs worth waiting for. –Billups Allen (12XU)

GREG ASHLEY:
***Fiction Is Non-Fiction:* LP**
I'm not certain who would think it's a good idea to open up an album with a ballad in 6/8 time played with brushes on the snare, but given that the demographic to which such a move would appeal must be a narrow but presumably deeply passionate one, if that's your bag, you oughtta be all over this one. Greg seems to be a quirky yet not altogether nontraditional songwriter cut from the Gordon Gano mold—i.e., right when you start to get too comfortable with his precocious lamentations, he'll throw in something sassy or moderately outrageous like *"I'm such a lazy man, take my eggs in bed / you're such a hungry girl, with your pussy of lead"* just to see if you're still listening—the downside being that *Fiction Is Non-Fiction* reminds me a lot more of the second Violent Femmes album than the first. It also sounds a bit like an Americanized version of the Jazz Butcher's *Sex and Travel* record, minus, unfortunately, large amounts of the wit and charm. Things heat up for a while on side two, with a stompin' cover of Briard's "Fuck the Army" leading into "Blondes and Cyanide," a similarly uptempo number, but this record currently sits in a certain spiritual limbo with me as I am unsure if the irritation this guy provokes in me makes it worth my while to see if the album grows on me with repeated listenings. On the one hand, you never know. On the other hand, why take such chances? BEST SONG: "Fuck the Army." BEST SONG TITLE: "Gabriella Has Another Dance" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Also includes a Sonic Youth cover. I just noticed that. –Rev. Nørb (Dusty Medical)

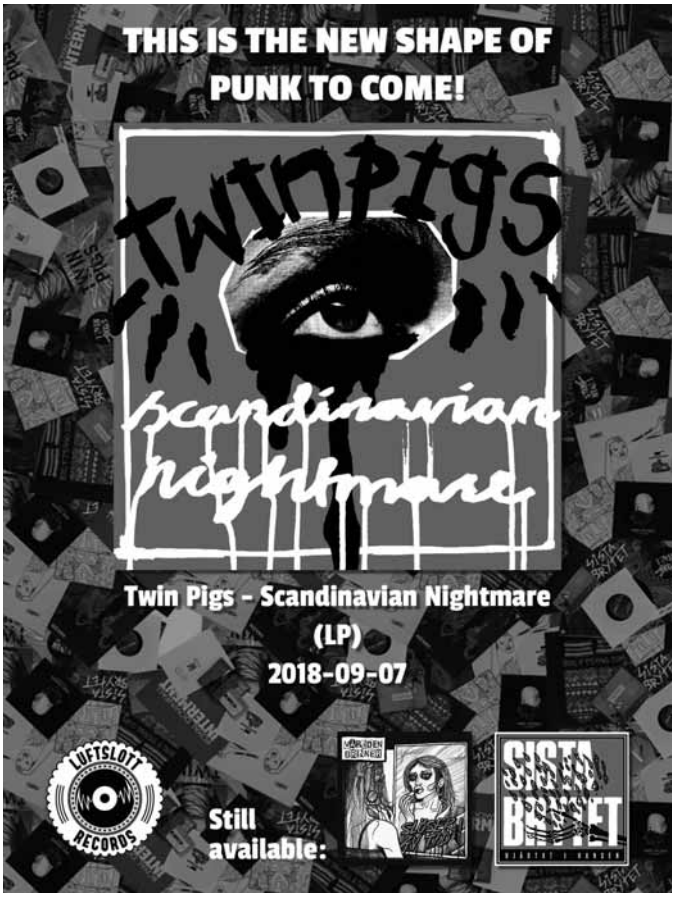
HANK WOOD AND THE HAMMERHEADS: Self-titled: LP
Hank Wood And The Hammerheads return from a four year sabbatical with an even more vibrant, jubilant take on their already high energy approach to stomping NYC punk despite the underlying tone of heartbreak and loneliness. Lyrics so utterly depressing yet so relatable: "Baby I'm alone even when I'm standing next to you." The vocals are belted out in soulful aggression, a style that has become all Hank's own. You know you've got a truly magical record in your hands when you can't flip the record over because you're spending so much time with the first side. Spoiler alert: the second side is just as amazing. Highest possible recommendation if you're fucking punk at all. –Juan Espinosa (Toxic State, toxicstaterecords.com)

HARSH R: *The Year of the Dog:* CS
Harsh R is an electronica act from Olympia with a smidgen of punk and industrial influences. It's danceable and aggressive, but strictly for people as interested in the hardware utilized to record electronica as they would be in the end product. I can't tell if it's over my head or if it's incredibly dumb, but it's kind of funny how angry it is. I can imagine people dancing to it in a club and then suddenly starting to playfully incorporate assaultive/fighting style motions on one other. Yes, it's that odd. –Art Ettinger (Self-released, harshr.bandcamp.com)

HERESY: *Face Up to It! (Expanded 30th Anniversary Edition):* 2 x LP+CD/CD
Back in 1988 Heresy's *Face Up to It!* was expected to be a barnstorming USHC-influenced collection of songs from a U.K. outfit which had been increasing the pace of it delivery for a couple of years. However, like many albums of the time, the outcome was disappointing, with a compressed sound that did the band no favors whatsoever. With no money available for a remix, *Face Up to It!* was released as a significant under-representation of the band's ability. Fast forward a few decades and Heresy and Boss Tuneage were able to use the original tapes to remix the album and this 30th anniversary edition, featuring an additional eight tracks, is the result. On the first listen, I was stunned at how different it sounded in comparison to the original. The songs raced along with a whole new lease on life, resurrected into a driving force propelled by some magnificent drumming, which kept up a frantic pace at times. Rarely do I focus in on the drums as the most prominent instrument, but here there is not much choice given they form the basis of almost everything that goes on. How the bass manages to work in tandem is beyond me, but that and the guitar do a bang-up job of adding to the maelstrom, allowing John March to throw his vocals into the mix. I doff my cap to all involved in the process of putting right this wrong, as this double LP, which also comes with the CD version, is an excellent package. –Rich Cocksedge (Boss Tuneage)

HI MY NAME IS RYAN: *Honestly:* CS
A capella, low-fi indie pop that delivers bleak lyrics with peppy melodies in a way that elicits knowing laughter from the audience. Early Daniel Johnston is an easy comparison, but instead of being bleedingly earnest, the humor is wry and emotional, transcending novelty or outsider art. These sixteen songs sound like they were recorded on a boombox at a house show, and it's cool to hear the audience commit and react. Great, now I'm mentally preparing to spend tomorrow singing, "Do you ever feel so blue that you wish god would fucking crush you?" under my breath at work. –Chris Terry (Related)

HIDDEN RIFLES: *Across the Neighborhoods:* CD
Members of Invisible Things, Minutemen, Scarcity Of Tanks, Swans, and U.S. Maple let fly with what can only be described as a distillation of all the above parts—at turns funky, artsy, dissonant, jazzy, and oodles of



noisy. Rhythms bounce with abandon amid sheets of noisy guitar, and yet there's an odd catchiness to it all, not unlike (yes, the obvious comparison, I know) the sweet spot between the skronk and major label eras of Sonic Youth's aural trajectory. Gonna get played to death, this is. –Jimmy Alvarado (Total Life Society)

HIPSHAKES, THE:
***"Shot"* b/w *"Samba"*: 7"**
Dang, this is the first thing I think I've heard from this Manchester band since their *Shake Their Hips* album a decade ago. I liked 'em but had no idea they were still a going concern. Their pelvic wobblings deliver two decent, modestly catchy buzz-punk numbers here, but, at a trim 1:52 in length, "Shot" doesn't really pack enough punch to be a top-shelf A side. If they'd stuck "Shot" on the B side and punched up the A side with something of measurably greater spectacularness, I think you might really have something; as it stands it's decent but hardly *Burp Tomorrow's Pick of the Week* material. BEST SONG & TITLE: "Shot." FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Comes in a generic Nerve Centre Records company sleeve, which I rather enjoy. –Rev. Nørb (Nerve Centre)

HIS NAME IS ALIVE:
***Black Wings:* 2 x LP**
I'm not really sure what I just stumbled into, but diving into this double LP with zero context feels a little like accidentally barging in on a forbidden cult ritual. The door swings open, a sound that I literally mistook for an airplane flying by overhead swells into being, and a dozen cloaked figures turn in silent unison. Sounds dramatic, but not any more than this record is. It turns out that *Black Wings* consists of remixes and reimaginings of pieces originally written for an album that was recorded in collaboration with a particle physicist at the Large Hadron Collider in Switzerland. So do with that what you will. Many of the thirty or so tracks are linked together by what I'd have to call an a capella outer space choir. Besides that, there are synths and strings and glitchy sound collages all over the place. Just normal outer space choir stuff. Sonically impressive as it may be… at its heart, I think this might be prog, and it does not move me. –Indiana Laub (Happy Happy Birthday To Me)

HIVE / NO SKIN: Split: 7"
This fantastic split from a killer new Minneapolis label features two hardcore supergroups from the Twin Cities. Hive is made up of current and former members of Disembodied, Bosnia, Threadbare, and Endeavor. No Skin is comprised of present-day and ex-members of In Defence and Deterioration. With that pedigree on hand, of course you get meticulous, hooky songs from start to finish. On colored vinyl and housed in a thick fold-out sleeve, the packaging is as stellar the contents therein. This split is definitely a record to seek out. –Art Ettinger (FTWNU2)

HUB CITY STOMPERS:
***Haters Dozen:* CD**
I like ska a lot, but not so much that I actively seek out ska records. However, the Hub City Stompers are so pleasing I may need to revise that position. Then again, I may not since this record has every aspect of ska that I enjoy—at various moments it recalls the Specials, Bosstones, and Let's Go Bowling, so what need is there for me to get any more ska records? The music is frantic, up-tempo ska, but the vocals are what really hook me: harmonies akin to Dance Hall Crashers at some moments, then others reminiscent of HR and even a bit like Eminem. The whole thing leaves me spent, exhausted, and happy. Really solid stuff, with humor in spades, and satisfying start to finish. –The Lord Kveldulfr (Altercation)

INDUSTRIAL HOLOCAUST / LOTUS FUCKER: Split: 7"
I'm pretty surprised that I'd never heard of Brazil's Industrial Holocaust before now. They're pretty good and have apparently been around since 1991. They deliver bottom-heavy, blown-out grind that's obviously influenced by early grind/death and pulls exactly zero punches. I tend to like their slower riffs (à la Unholy Grave) but there's a lot to love here. Lotus Fucker lay down their swan song on the other side. It's not as dressed up as some of their other records, but they wear the lo-fi recording style well here. –Ian Wise (SPHC, sphc.bigcartel.com)

INTENSIVE CARE:
***Everything Has Its Price:* 7"**
Dissonant, dense, difficult hardcore with a bit of an industrial bent in the undertow. Quasi-tribal rhythms and rumbling bass provide a backbeat to gurgly vocals and white sheets of noise. The perfect party-clearer here. –Jimmy Alvarado (Iron Lung)

IRISH HANDCUFFS:
***Comfort in Distraction:* 10"EP**
Sometimes the true test of a band's mettle is how it copes with adversity, however minor. I once saw Irish Handcuffs play in front of no more than a handful of paying customers and rather than let this meager crowd get the band down, it pulled out all the stops, producing an excellent set of catchy punk rock which made for a fun night. This one-sided 10" is the German band's first release in two years and is a continuation of the anthemic melodic punk it has previously produced on a host of singles and one album. English lyrics certainly aid my enjoyment as I get to singalong to a trio of tracks all played out with two guitars throwing down some huge riffs and memorable leads. I've made good use of these songs on my bus journey to work as they have the ability to make me feel on top of the world. That's how infectious they are. –Rich Cocksedge (Fond Of Life / Shield / Get Party)

JAD: Self-titled: 7"
JAD intends to satisfy your hunger for d-beat. The Warsaw outfit has

re-released their five-song demo tape on vinyl. It's angry, viciously executed, and to the point. Since the lyrics are in Polish, there's not much else to say except the cover image is of a snake wearing a miter (you know, a "pope hat") with an upside cross. What else can you ask for? –Sean Arenas (Self-released, jadpunk.bandcamp.com)

JIMMY VAPID: *Night Moves:* LP
Hamilton, Ontario's Jim Vapid has unleashed his first "solo" LP, after a string of singles of the last few years, both on his own and with The Vapids. Fans of his main act over the years will love this current offering, but make no mistake: this isn't a Vapids record. Sure, there are similarities, but Jim's evolved and making it known on *Night Moves*. The opening title track ignites with a blast, sounding more reminiscent of classic '80s California punk than a standard Ramones tune. The next handful of tracks have a classic punk rock'n'roll feel to them—edging closer to The Dead Boys or even Candy Snatchers at times—guitar solos included. Jim's always written a hell of a ballad, with this album being no exception. "World on Running" is a perfectly written, dynamic song. With all the above in mind, we're still talking Jim from the Vapids here, but the music is tighter and the production is crystal clear, without being corny. Just in time for summer. –Steve Adamyk (Self-released, jimmyvapid.bandcamp.com)

KHOBRETTI: *Neolithic:* CD
Houston, Texas-based Khobretti step up to the table with a six-track EP that wisely keeps things short and sweet. Most tracks are mid-tempo stompers with a blazing thrasher or two thrown in for good measure. Most surprising perhaps was the first track, "Bowery at Midnight," that manages to slip in a bit of synth to good effect. I personally love it when a band takes a chance every now and again. They're now on my radar. –Garrett Barnwell (Feral Noise, khobretti.com)

LAWRENCE ARMS, THE: *We Are the Champions of the World:* 2xLP
A kind of retrospective collection, rather than a greatest hits. Selected songs that span the entirety of their catalog. Twenty-nine of 'em, from 1999's *A Guided Tour of Chicago* up to 2014's *Metropole*, with the fourth side of the double album featuring a number of unreleased songs. They get a lot of flack from certain factions in the punk scene for being formulaic, when in actuality they've been doing this stuff for nigh on twenty years and might instead be considered some of the first crop of "beard punk" or "orgcore" whatever. They've always been excellent lyricists, and for a three-piece can certainly craft some dynamic songs. Anyway, *Champions* has beautiful gatefold packaging, excellent sound and design, hilarious liner notes, and the unreleased songs (mostly from the *Oh! Calcutta!* sessions) are pretty solid. As someone who already has most of these songs but isn't a completist, I don't think I'd ever buy this, but it certainly serves a great introduction to the band, and for those of you who need everything they've ever put out, the unreleased stuff will be a treat. –Keith Rosson (Fat)

LAWSUIT MODELS: *Off the Pavement:* LP
Denver's Lawsuit Models fall firmly into the brand of emo pop that so much of the underground turned its back on over the past decade and a half. There's a reason that sound captivated so many, and Lawsuit Models express themselves through that medium with remarkable sincerity. Some of the tracks are a bit more influenced by 1990s pop punk than the emo pop that followed, creating kind of a to-and-fro vibe between the songs. Thoroughly enjoyable, Lawsuit Models aren't just a clever name. They have the chops to back it up. Non-snobs will want to check it out. –Art Ettinger (Snappy Little Numbers)

LOUDMOUTH: *Easy Tiger!:* CD
When I noticed a cover of a Dickie Hammond-penned song and saw that they were from Sunderland, I probably groaned a little deep inside, thinking: Here we go again with another gruff-voiced, dual guitar thing à la Leatherface. Surprise, surprise! While taking a reverential bow to the late Mr. Hammond, this CD was happily not the tribute-fest I feared. Instead, there are eleven original, tightly honed tracks of mid-tempo punk that actually cross a lot of bridges musically as well as the above-mentioned cover song. In fact, these guys are so tight in places they might actually be too good to play punk rock, if that makes any sense. I mean that in a complimentary sense, as for no reason at all while listening to this CD, I mentally blurted out, "These guys are like real musicians!" Well done and totally recommended. –Garrett Barnwell (Boss Tuneage)

MAD PARADE / RIOTGUN: Split: 7" EP
Mad Parade: Two melodic anthems served up in their inimitable mix of U.K. punk and early O.C. 'core. The zippier of the tunes, "Infamy," is my personal Pick-To-Click, but both are swell additions to an already stellar oeuvre. Riotgun: Larry 'n' his cohorts turn in a solid streetpunk singalong, "Pick up the Pieces," and do the same to a cover of "53rd and 3rd." Been a while since I'd heard anything new from Riotgun, and it's great to hear they're still cranking 'em out in fine fashion. –Jimmy Alvarado (Gutterwail, madparade.biz)

MANIAC: *Dead Dance Club:* LP
I can't tell you how long I have been itching to hear this. Actually, I can. It was almost immediately after I heard their debut album a few years ago. I was hooked and I needed more. I gushed about it in these very pages where I talked about their distinct "Pacific Northwest filtered through Los Angeles sound." I stand by that, but with the

release of their sophomore album it is clear that this band is so much more. Right from the kick off it is apparent that this record is something special. It's like an invisible hand reached inside me and started shaking my spine back and forth so my head would start jerking up and down like some kind of possessed bobblehead. The people at the bus stop were concerned. Is there such a thing as serious partying? Maniac is serious partying. I absolutely love The Cars. When I first put this on, the first thing I thought was "It's like The Cars were tougher, modernized and fifty times better!" I can't get these songs out of my head and I couldn't be happier. –Ty Stranglehold (Dirt Cult)

MEKONS, THE:
***Never Been in a Riot:* 7"**
MEKONS, THE*: Where Were You:* 7"
The Mekons are synonymous with the "post-punk" moniker. Alongside bands like Public Image Limited, The Fall, and Gang Of Four, The Mekons forged a new path for noise and avant-garde themes in music in the immediate wake of the punk explosion of the late 1970s. Among the difficult to find and pricey classics are the first two Mekons' singles. Superior Viaduct has reissued these two singles for your post-punk convenience. "Never Been in a Riot" is a cloppity-clop punk rocker with a mechanical chug that feels as if it's about to fall apart at any moment. The bass ascends and descends as the guitars and angry vocals blurt out at even intervals. The second single begins with "Where Were You?" The song starts with a mechanical guitar strum and a rising snare roll. The guitars kick in with natural distortion through overdriven clean channels. The flat, matter-of-fact vocal delivery over mechanically angry, factory-sounding music became the standard for bands diverging from the 4/4 rock resurgence punk was utilizing. The Mekons put out several albums, changing their sound from time to time. The first two singles are essential, wrench-turning thought-rock. They're a must for post-punk and '77 fans. –Billups Allen (Superior Viaduct)

MESSTHETICS, THE: Self-titled: LP
I'm from the school of thought that believes there are two kinds of people: those who like Fugazi, and those who are wrong. Call it bias if you will, but from the moment I heard ex-Fugazi members Joe Lally and Brendan Canty were teaming up on a new musical project, I was on board before I'd heard a single note. Their all-instrumental band The Messthetics, with guitarist Anthony Pirog, does not disappoint. It's impossible to not draw parallels between their current project, and Fugazi, but the Messthetics are more than merely Fugazi Part II. The instrumental nature allows Lally, Canty, and Pirog to focus entirely on musicianship and craft songs that are simultaneously technical, wild, and beautiful. The result is some of the most nuanced, and damn catchy tunes you're liable to hear this year. –Paul J. Comeau (Dischord)

MISS DESTINY: *Ice Queen:* 7" EP
Gritty rock'n'roll out of Melbourne that's easy on the ears. Both "Ice Queen" and "Randy" will not disappoint you rockers. If you like the Midnite Snaxxx, MAMA, and The Rubs, then you'll want to pick this one up. –Camylle Reynolds (Shipping Steel)

MOON BLOOD: *Violent Acts:* 7"
Moonblood's new 7" sharpens the hardcore style they developed on their past demo, *Cramp*. The pounding drums and the roaring guitar riffs on the first track, "Choke" kicked off the record very nicely. This formula is effectively replicated on the next two tracks, "Neu Pogo" and "No Excuse," where zooming riffs are complemented with pleasantly repetitive drumming. The vocals on all of these songs are highly emotive and match the instrumentation in spirit. "Shroud" teases towards more of the last three tracks, but devolves into some piercing experimentation that sets it (marginally) apart from the rest of the release. "Vile" effectively finishes off the album with more of the same. Moonblood's sound is sharp and confrontational, and the slight monotony of the songs is excusable considering that this release is no longer than five minutes. Definitely a nice listen for hardcore fans looking for bands with emotive female vocals and catchy riffs. –Anna Farr (Running In Place, runninginplacerecords.com)

MOPE GROOVES: *Vanished:* LP
Odd-pop right in line with predecessors like the Raincoats and the Vaselines. Sharp guitars stab into the rhythm section one minute before sodding off into an almost '60s jangle the next, all with a singer who largely half-sings. Love the hand-glued art on the cover. –Jimmy Alvarado (See My Friends)

MOVEMENT, THE: *Fools Like You:* CD
This is The Mighty Mighty Bosstones without the horns. From the ska guitar upstroke to the gravelly Dicky Barrett vocals, it's all here. The songs on *Fools Like You* are modernized a bit and without one solid hit. Imagine the Bosstones at their worst and that's what you have here. –Kurt Morris (Concrete Jungle)

MR. T EXPERIENCE, THE: *King Dork Approximately the Album:* LP
The late '80s/early '90s (and what followed in its wake) produced a bumper crop of shit bands Xeroxing Xeroxes of Xeroxed Ramones-template tunes about being bored, being dumb, and boobs. Mr. T Experience, to my mind, were one of the exceptions, no doubt because they were in there right when the swell was just beginning to take shape and long before everything got wiped out by a tsunami of mediocrity. Their latest album shows 'em still slugging along in the same vein: catchy songs about girls with creative name spellings, broken hearts, high school misery and so on; strong on quirky-smirky humor and teeth-aching sugary

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pop hooks. Long it's been since I wrote off this sub-niche, and equally long it's been since I dug something related to such niche this much, especially the acoustic-rag tunes that pop up here and there. –Jimmy Alvarado (Sounds Rad)

MUSCLE DUNGEON / THE LIGHTHEADS: Split: 7"
Split single from two Portland, Ore. bands that play fast and melodic stuff that is likely very influenced from the music of Denton, TX from the last decade and a half. This has never been one of my favorite styles but both bands are good at playing it. –Mike Frame (Sex Sheet, sexsheetrecords.com)

MUSCLE DUNGEON: *Beef Angel:* 7" EP
With a name like Muscle Dungeon, my expectations were subbasement low. But, boy, I feel stupid for doubting these Portland, Ore. punks because *Beef Angel* is fantastic. They blend Marked Men and Hickey, sweating a similar odor to that of California's Weird Night (formerly White Night). Song titles like "Bong Jovi," "Doom Saloon," and "Deep Whiff" mask Muscle Dungeon's airtight execution of straight-ahead, melody-driven punk. This five-song EP is raw, spontaneous, and catchy as fuck. Next time I won't be so hesitant to explore the muscle dungeon. –Sean Arenas (Sex Sheet)

NERVE BEATS: *New Essentials:* LP
I've been looking forward to more music from Hawaii's Nerve Beats since I saw them one random night in late 2015. At that time, I was jobless and new to Austin, so I had to be very careful with my play money. It was a five dollar show at Beerland and I was with some friends, so it seemed it was a relatively cheap and fun way to pass a few hours. The crowd wasn't very big, but Nerve Beats impressed those who were there, myself so much that I happily bought the 7" they were selling at the time, budget be damned. Nerve Beats are Minutemen-esque, with short, punchy songs, angular guitar, and jazz-inflected bass lines. On *New Essentials*, the sound is a little fuller, but the production is really in the red, just shy of being blown out, giving their songs even more urgency. I can't pick out one favorite, but immediate standouts are "Riot Meditation" and "Berlin 6 4." "T Dash 2" is reminiscent of The Oblivians "Memphis Creep." Supposedly, Nerve Beats are due to tour the greater forty-eight again soon, so definitely check them out if they hit your town. –Sal Lucci (Fine Concepts, fineconcepts.org)

NEUTRON RATS: *Primitive Past//Nuclear Future:* LP
Two-minute songs that spit punk rock. Gritty punks from New York who belong in a sweaty basement filled with cheap beer and great, sweaty times. –Ryan Nichols (Loud Punk)

NEW VOGUE: Self-titled: CS
New vogues and new bands. In addition to Priors, Montreal's Sonic Avenues have spawned yet another offshoot with the current offering in question. From the strum of the first chord, fans of Max's and Chance's previous records will find it instantly recognizable. Take that with a grain of salt though, since these tracks do not sit still for long. The songs are upbeat and punchy, but lean on a post-punk vibe and rawness that can't be ignored. "Stripped Down Animals" is the major thumper here. Most of the songs fall between the lines of Memphis garage punk, with a touch of Devo, and maybe some UK DIY à la Television Personalities. It's also mastered by Mikey Young, to boot. These are likely long gone already, but if you missed a copy, it's a good teaser for exciting things on the horizon. –Steve Adamyk (Self-released, newvogue.bandcamp.com)

NIHILIST CHEERLEADER: *Riot, Right?:* CD
Given their great name, I had high expectations for this debut from Athens' Nihilist Cheerleader. No disappointment here, but Nihilist Cheerleader is not what I expected; they're so much more. They're a lot, really. Pulling musical references in from across the board—'80s-style aggressive pop to dancey punk and—yes, I'll say it, riot grrrl—means even one song (I'm looking at you, "Drenched In") can feel like two different songs in the span of less than five minutes. The relatively interesting time signatures of "You're Ur Uniform" make it the standout track for me, but start from the beginning because you can't lose. –Nicole X (Perfect Attendance, perfectattendancerecords.com)

NO PROBLEM: *Let God Sort Em Out:* LP
I know that I spend a lot of time pumping up Canadian music. I can't help it. Not only do I have a natural need to validate our contributions to punk rock, but there is a rich history of bands up here that have the skills to back it up. Edmonton's No Problem is one of those bands. Time to preach from the mountaintops again! It would be one thing to say that No Problem is one of the best hardcore punk bands to come out of this (sometimes frozen) tundra, but they are so much more. On this third album, the band is raising the bar exponentially. Kicking off with an intro that feels almost like a '90s rap album, it builds up to its first hardcore blast. It's like the slow climb up the biggest hill of a roller coaster. You know what's coming; the butterflies are rising in your chest and the adrenaline is about to kick in. It would be wholly inaccurate to simply lump No Problem as a generic hardcore band. Much like Night Birds or Fucked Up, there are added elements to the intensity that result in a fuller sound. In this case, an ethereal, almost post-punk guitar sound weaves its way through the entire album, adding a texture that is irresistible. Every song is not a million kilometers a minute. There are slow burners in the mix too. The lyrics are well thought out and executed visions of current issues and apocalyptic

futures. I don't want to be that guy, but I have to say that I think this is a fucking masterpiece. I have only had this album for three days and I have lost count of how many times I've listened to it. I can already tell it is going to become a cornerstone in my record collection. In no way is that an exaggeration. Also, they have a simple yet eloquent logo, which is always a plus for a hardcore band. –Ty Stranglehold (Deranged)

NONNIE PARRY: *Karen Greenlee:* 7″ EP
Simple, direct punk that shares some sonic qualities with very early Zeros. Lyrical content covers a variety of topics—mental exhaustion, brain chips, death—but the tune likely to raise eyebrows is the title track, an ode to someone who was into, oh, a special kind of lovin'. –Jimmy Alvarado (Exotic Aquatic)

OLD FIRM CASUALS, THE: Self-titled: 12″ EP
This is a re-issue of long-running Bay Area skinhead punks the Old Firm Casuals' EP originally released in 2011. I was of course aware that this band features Lars Frederiksen (Rancid) on guitar and vocals but I was surprised to discover that the band also boasts two former members of Never Healed, a hardcore band that was especially gruesome sounding (no melodies, grunting vocals, my kind of band). Despite these contrasting differences, the Old Firm Casuals actually bang out some pretty fucking solid punk. Don't let the Fred Perrys fool you: the spirit is rooted in Blitz but the sound is more akin to "Clash City Rockers." Cuff up your jeans, polish your Docs, get your arse to the record shop, and demand this. –Juan Espinosa (Pirates Press)

OVERSIGHT: *Transparency:* EP
Full-on early '90s style New York hardcore out of Vegas. Straight up Sick Of It All meets Agnostic Front beatdown. I don't need this shit at all, but I'm sure if I caught them live I'd be all over it. –Tim Brooks (Running In Place, runninginplacerecors.com)

P. PAUL FENECH: *The F-Files:* CD
Guitarist, vocalist, and founding member of O.G. psychobillies the Meteors, P. Paul delivers an unshockingly Meteors-like set (well, from what I can remember, having not played my Meteors album since the '80s and all) that sounds more or less like the Stray Cats rhythm section augmented with a surfier version of Duane Eddy's low, cool guitar twang and various Misfits-like nods to *Famous Monsters of Filmland* and *Fangoria* and such, all designed to transport the swooning listener to a merry pocket universe where the Big Bad Wolf has tattoos on his neck and always eats Little Red Riding Hood. If you're already a member of the gang, this won't make you leave; if you're not already in the gang, this won't compel you to join. Either way, a fairly entertaining listen. BEST SONG & SONG TITLE "Bad Universe." FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: "Recorded on 'Hot Rod' Tube Equipment!" –Rev. Nørb (Mutant Rock, mutantrockrecords.com)

PAARKS: *Ronny:* 7″ single
Guitar-driven pop with a retro familiarity ushering in a light—if sometimes melancholy—mood, recalling summers and names that have blurred with the passing of time. You think you have it figured out, but as you get closer to the point of reference, it slips through, that much further out of reach. The title track is upbeat and punky without being heavy handed or martial, similar a particular U.K. band from the early years in spirit, filtered through decades of musical history. Of the four tracks, the one I look forward to the most is the closer, "Jag Anrar All For Evigt" (although "Moon" is pretty amusing). The vocals have a faraway quality about them while the chorus brings you in to the moment. The music is pure class. –Matt Average (Luftslott)

PARTIAL TRACES: *Glass Beach:* LP
A bunch of poppy punk stalwarts (Soviettes, Banner Pilot, Dear Landlord, Gateway District, Rivethead…) got together and made something rad and decidedly different from all those bands. *Glass Beach* delivers song after song of dark, thoughtful post-punk, more taut and dissonant than gruff and anthemic. That's not to say these songwriters let their pop sensibilities fall by the wayside—the melodies are on point at every turn, vocals and shimmering guitar lines interweaving and mounting to emotional crescendos. "Dashi Bay" and "Blank State" evoke that haunted heartland feeling I haven't felt this much since the last Divers album. "Vacancies" is like the amped up New Order song I didn't know I needed. I've been trying not to compare this to Interpol, a band I have been aggressively ignoring for fifteen years, but it's very possible that Partial Traces sound kind of like a much punker, more interesting version of Interpol that I really like. Super into this. –Indiana Laub (Salinas)

PERVERTS AGAIN: *Friday Night Light:* LP
Simultaneously arty, stoopid/smart, minimal and tribal, there's a lot going on here beneath a largely lo-fi veneer. The singer has a style that at times resembles the cadence of a Trump speech, at others relies on simple repetition, while the rest of the band stomps around and gets weird. Oddball punk at its finest. I'm sure their cover of "My Life" has Billy Joel spinning in his gra—what? He ain't dead yet?!? –Jimmy Alvarado (Total Punk, floridasdying.com)

PHYSIQUE: *Punk Life Is Shit:* 12: EP
Back when I was a kid, Flipside used to put out "video fanzines," VHS tapes featuring live performances of assorted bands filmed largely around the Los Angeles area. One band in the series that demanded attention was the Iconoclast. Opening with an image of

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a plane dropping bombs with a super-distorted bass providing the soundtrack, things quickly switched to the band cranking out a wild performance of their song "Battlefields"—with flailing arms, whipping heads, and a wall of Discharge-influenced noise. My friends and I were floored. Physique sounds here like they cribbed their sound straight from that performance—heavy Discharge influence buried under sheets of distorted guitar noise, and I can easily see in my mind's eye them just walloping their instruments in wild abandon. Not always hip on the "d-beat" stuff, but this bad boy is fuggin' choice. –Jimmy Alvarado (Iron Lung)

PINNED IN PLACE: *Rubbernecking at the Gates of Hell:* CS
This past March I got laid off from the job I hated and decided to follow two Razorcake-affiliated bands around the Northwest on their tour—always a great decision. That was Marriage Material and Pinned In Place, of which Sean Arenas is in both, and Daryl Gussin in the former. I absolutely loved Pinned's last full length *Ghostwritten By...* from which "Radium Girls" is a personal favorite. Though I'd only listened to this follow-up once before committing to seeing them four nights in a row, I was endeared to it quickly. After the first night I was walking around with choruses of "Codependence Day" on loop in my head. Or waking up to "Linkedin with a Vampire" on repeat in my subconscious. Sean's voice and lyrics are what hooked me, then the melodies and start-stop-start pacing of the music is what reeled me in, with time signature breaks that keep you on your toes, heavy driven bass, and super fucking pretty vocals. The songs are introspective, thoughtful, pensive, and honest. On top of all those accolades, they're also super fucking catchy and their drummer Nate Torres is like a loose locomotive pummeling forward. I suppose musically it could come right alongside (early) emo and indie, but it's also sort of post-punk, and really mathy. Ironically, Pinned In Place is anything but. –Kayla Greet (Reflective Tapes)

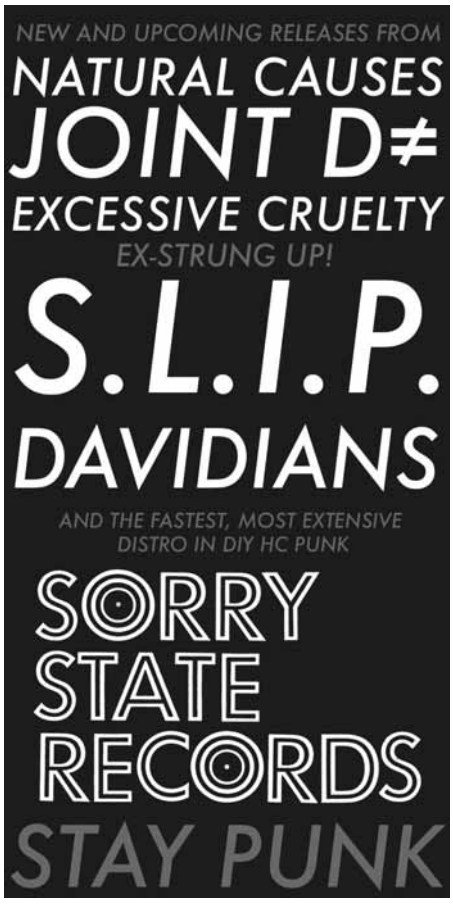
PISSE / PERKY TITS: Split: 10"
Deliberately obnoxious and strange, this split between two crazy German bands vacillates between inspired and indecipherable. Both bands use keyboards, drum machines, and other devices that lend an experimental and/or jokey quality to what, at times, are quite aggressive, exciting songs. I kind of dig it, even if I don't understand it. We're not talking a language barrier as much as a musical one. I don't think these groups are joke bands per se, but they're definitely into messing with their listeners. Peculiar in the purest ways, it's a humdinger of a record. –Art Ettinger (Phantom, phantom.tk)

PLASTIC WEATHER: Self-titled: 7"
While self-described as "bratty synth punk," I found wanting this to be even more bratty and more punk than it actually is. But, that's not to say that it's not good, because it is: vocals layered in reverb with unique mix of '80s-inspired new wave and darker post-punk influences. I bet this even comes off better in a live setting. Good stuff. –Mark Twistworthy (plasticweather.com)

PRETTY FLOWERS, THE: *Why Trains Crash:* LP
On the spur of the moment, I decided to catch Pretty Flowers at the Hayworth Theatre in Los Angeles. They were the musical guest for Tomorrow! with Ron Lynch, a long-running variety show that begins at midnight. Something about their performance at the Hayworth, to a crowd of *maybe* fifteen people, solidified it for me: they're a well-kept secret—a songwriter's band. The kind of band that deserves heaps of respect for earnestly putting their hearts and souls into crafting a faultless debut LP. Noah Green (Henry Clay People) sings on "Electrical" with aching sincerity, belting lyrics that would be saccharine if delivered by anyone else: "Sunlight's got a light that's better / For spitting out cassette tape dreams / On the kitchen floor." On "Temple of Gunpowder," Green bends his voice like Built To Spill's Doug Martsch, channeling their laidback yet infectious melodies. Closer "Deceptionist" showcases swirling dual guitars, ending the record with a sense of finality. Pretty Flowers craft refreshingly unpretentious indie rock. Think The Replacements without the self-destruction. *Why Trains Crash* will remain on repeat in my car, at home, and at work for a long while. –Sean Arenas (Dirt Cult)

PRETTY FLOWERS: *Why Trains Crash:* LP
Take some punky indie rock like Superchunk, give it big power pop hooks and guitar licks that whisper Thin Lizzy, have the singer be nasal and lyrical like a toned-down Weakerthans, make it wistful but not weak and catchy but not cute, make it twelve songs long and let it go forth into the world, inspiring cheers then tears in bars, the pounding of steering wheels in cars, the leaves to change, favorite shirts to be pulled on. –Chris Terry (Dirt Cult)

PUNKEMON: *Gotta Rock 'Em All!:* 7" EP
What friends have to say about this EP: "I stole my brother's credit card in 2000 to buy the MP3," "All the collectors catch them all!" –Kendra K; and, "The cover art is so bad I can't bring myself to own it." –Bobby M. So what turns out to be something I was convinced I'd hate, I actually don't, like, not at all. Punkemon was the brainchild of Dr. Frank (Mr. T-Experience), Chris Appelgren (Lookout!/the PeeChees/Bumblescrump), Chris Imlay (the Hi-Fives), and Mel Bergman (Phantom Surfers), recorded in '99, which begs the question of who is on Farfisa (all? none?). Apparently, these songs have only been available as an MP3, but are now offered for the first time on bubblegum pink and lavender vinyl twenty years later, which adds to the



absurdity of it all. Both "Lickitung" and "Pocket Monsters" are undeniably catchy and fun. Regardless of how much you utterly want to hate it going into it, these will win you over. Lyrics are stupid, but the melodies and hooks are just solid. The cover art is over-the-top—a pink and purple punk Pokémon rocking out—it's one of the most terrible things I've ever laid my eyes on. Also, disclaimer: I hate Pokémon. I kind of hate myself for loving this. –Camylle Reynolds (Sounds Rad)

RAD: *Sacramento Is Rad +1*: CS
RAD has the ability to both utterly slay and give you a belly chuckle at the same time. Hardcore punk is not a zero sum game, so let's not take ourselves too seriously. Their latest (last?) release, *Sacramento Is Rad + 1,* is a tribute to Sacramento punk. RAD covers Rebel Truth's "Child Hosts the Parasite" and "All I Know," then weirdo punks The Lizards' "Coke Up My Butt." The "+1" is Poison Idea's "Cult Band," because, well, they're not from Sac. Four songs in four minutes and twenty-two seconds. Done. –Camylle Reynolds (Sacramento)

REAL KIDS, THE: *The Kids 1974 Demos, The Real Kids 1977/78 Demos / Live at the Rat! January 22, 1978:* LPs
As I get older and my record buying budget shrinks due to adulting concerns, I find myself less of a completist. Usually I skip live or demo records, but in the case of these Real Kids releases, I pulled the trigger, knowing Crypt Records would do them justice. Man, are these records beautiful! Both are single LPs housed in a gatefold cover, with tons of pictures and liner notes. In the case of *Demos*, there's a thirty-two page book (which I was not able to finish by this review deadline). If you thought Crypt's Pagans reissues from the early '00s were something, wait until you see these. *Demos* features early, uh, demos, by the (then) Kids from 1974 and The Real Kids from early 1977. The sound quality is amazing, considering the age of the recordings. Yes, there's tape hiss but I have no problem with it, as we get to hear these songs mastered as loud as Crypt is known to master records. "Nowadaze Kids" and "I'm Going Blind" are brain melters. Why the band didn't keep these songs in rotation and give them a proper recording is beyond me. "Coming Around" is MC5-fierce. At times, the guitars have a New York Dolls-esque bray to them. *Live at the Rat!* scorches. The band is tight, totally on point, and singer John Felice's voice is strong. My only real complaint is that the set starts off with "Better Be Good." I like the song and all, but not my pick for an opener. But this set was recorded when I was only six months old, so I guess I don't get a say. –Sal Lucci (Crypt)

RED CITY RADIO: *Skytigers:* CD
One listen was about all I could put up with on this. If radio friendly butt rock is your thing, you might dig this. For me, the highlight of *Skytigers* was the clip of Charlie Chaplin's signature speech from his movie *The Great Dictator*. Personally, I'd rather just watch the movie. –Paul J. Comeau (Red Scare, redscare.net)

RED MASS: *Rat Race:* 7"
Red Mass is a very prolific group from Montreal that wears its goth and psychedelia influences on its sleeve, front and center, which are not common in garage punk. With over thirty releases out there, Red Mass is one of those unique forces in the underground that can't be stopped. The core members are Roy Vucino and Hannah Lewis, with others collaborating on this record, too. Simultaneously accessible and experimental, Red Mass is a delight. –Art Ettinger (It's Trash!)

RETIREMENT: Self-titled: 7" EP
Raw, pissed-off, mid-tempo hardcore falling somewhere between early Negative Approach and Bib. Add blown-out production to give some heft to the sonic virulence and yer good to go. –Jimmy Alvarado (Iron Lung)

REVEREND BEAT-MAN AND THE NEW WAVE: *Blues Trash:* CD
Reverend Beat-Man And The New Wave is a hard rock blues band from Bern, Switzerland, of all places. This album starts off with pounding, noisy guitar work on "I Have Enough" and "I'm Not Gonna Tell You." Channeling Captain Beefheart vocally and a mix of psychobilly and blues influences instrumentally, the group moves on to more a more somber sound through the middle of the record, occasionally throwing an accordion into the mix on a couple of the tracks. The bands seems to show off some Tom Waits influence in tracks like "You're on Top," where gruff vocals manage to capture the sound of a pensive acedia in the vein of gin-soaked memory. The record finishes with further accordion experimentation. This release is perfectly weird, in a way where the songs are absolutely listenable, but still cautiously bizarre. This should be enjoyable to fans of blues rock, Captain Beefheart, the Cramps, or anyone looking for sad, bluesy accordion tunes. –Anna Farr (Voodoo Rhythm)

ROTTEN: *Waiting for the Bomb:* 7"
The A side is a kind of gloomy, anarcho-esque, mid-tempo stomper. Tinges of death rock with cool minor-key guitar melodies hold it together. The flip is a Discharge cover filtered through the Rotten style. –Ian Wise (Loud Punk)

ROUTEENS: Self-titled: LP
Rock-solid thud punk with tight hi-hats and frenetic downstroke-guitars. There's a dark tinge to the proceedings, giving it an edge that makes 'em a bit more Overnight Lows than Marked Men. Weird hearing Germans singing en Español on "Qué No." Good stuff here. –Jimmy Alvarado (Kink, kink-records.de)

RUBY KARINTO: *Spray Bottle:* LP
Well, this is a fun record with just the right amount of experimentation, without crossing the unlistenable line.

It's got lots of great dancey beats, interesting keyboard arrangements, and spunky vocals. If you enjoy Crass Records, or bands like Kleenex, Le Tigre, Yeah Yeah Yeahs, or Perfect Pussy, this record will be your new friend. –Ryan Nichols (Hozac)

RULETA RUSA:
***Viviendo Una Maldicion:* LP**
San Francisco's Ruleta Rusa have this uncanny ability to mix street punk, hardcore, and straight-ahead rock'n'roll with a seamlessness too few others attempting the same have managed in quite a while. As per usual, the songs here have an anthemic quality without relying on chants and singalong bits to get there, not unlike the Effigies' best work, pero en Español, and the singer's ability to keep his raspy howl largely in tune is a wonder unto itself. To those unfamiliar with 'em, allow me to introduce you to yer fave new band. –Jimmy Alvarado (Sorry State)

SEA LILIES: *Soonest:* 12" EP
Cool, muscular, guitar-heavy stuff with a post-punk vibe to it. Swaggering and Wire-like at times—dynamic and confidently veering and well-executed, with a fully-realized sound for a three-piece. The highly stylized orange and white cover art illustration of a disgruntled office guy staring into a fishbowl and instead of a fish, there's *another little him* inside the bowl is both pretty smart and not quite indicative of the contents. Features members of the Thumbs and Sick Sick Birds, which hopefully perks your ears up. As a six-song 12", *Soonest* make a solid case—instead of waiting for it to be over, you're left wanting more. Nicely done. Looking forward to more from these folks. –Keith Rosson (Tired As A Chicken, sealilies.bandcamp.com)

SECT MARK: *Worship:* LP
Sect Mark from Italy summon the ghosts of dead-and-gone Midwest hardcore heroes (United Mutation and Mecht Mensch, among others) and the modern brutish force of bands such as Gag, whom they just happen to be label mates with. Iron Lung know what they do and don't like, but they also know what's good for you. So buy it or else. –Juan Espinosa (Iron Lung)

SHARK TOYS: *Labyrinths:* CD
Potent mix of early '80s South Bay oddball punk and artsy punk from points east. It's all kinds of dissonant, but they've got a manic energy to 'em and, like Mission Of Burma (who they cover here), they know to keep at least a toe or two in the realm of "pop" to maintain a sense of cohesive catchiness to the whole. Love out-of-the-box bands and these cats are aces in that department. –Jimmy Alvarado (In The Red)

SHATTERBOX:
***Strung Out on the Line:* LP**
Shatterbox released *Strung Out on the Line* in '81 with handmade jackets adorned with spray paint and glued-on images. The album rides the good line of tough-sounding power pop and *L.A.M.F.* punk. It's hard to believe there are still albums of this quality out there being unearthed. The guitar playing utilizes all the rock'n'roll that hung from the trees in the '70s. The band can spin a chorus. There are loads of solid back-ups with attitude-laced harmonies. The New York Dolls' *Mercer Street Sessions* opened my eyes at a young age to how tough a jaded harmony can sound. The title track of this album really captures the bored delivery that makes rock'n'roll seem sometimes so effortless. "Anytime" also contains one of those choruses that sticks with you. There are loads of angst-ridden lyrics about partying and where they live. It's essential if you ride the power pop/punk line. –Billups Allen (Dig)

SHIPWRECKED:
***We Are the Sword:* 12" EP**
Nothing like a good ol' fashioned elbow to the jaw. Killer stuff from this Norwegian hardcore band that brings together a healthy mix of Iron Cross, Denunzio-esque vocals, and Battle Ruins. A crucial mix of old and new ideas make these seven songs feel fresh and vibrant while still absolutely punishing. The A side leads off with a looming atmospheric soundscape, which quickly ignites into a thunderous propulsion of hardcore dominance. Fall in line, or fall to the floor. –Daryl (Foreign Legion, ourwayoflife.storenvy.com)

SINGING LUNGS:
***Not Quite Nebraska:* CS**
Serviceable lo-fi pop punk from three guys in Grand Rapids. One of them designs board games for a living, one of them is a zookeeper. They like music from the '90s and that's usually a huge red flag for me, but I'm okay with this. –Matt Werts (Questionable Mono Tapes, singinglungs.bandcamp.com)

SIR COYLER AND HIS ASTHMATIC BAND: *Invincible Blues:* 7"
"Invincible Blues" is a great bar jam. It starts up with a John Reis-esque riff. Then it carries a flailing-arms, drunk-at-a-show-on-Saturday-night kind of vibe. "Pink and Blue" is a great tune as well. It steps back from the center of the dance floor and just head bobs its way through catchy lyrics and fuzzy rock'n'roll. –Ryan Nichols (Pig Baby, pigbabyrecords@gmail.com)

SISTA BRYTET: *Hjärtat I Handen:* LP
This Swedish band doesn't lack for energy as it delivers twelve tracks of power pop with hints of punk thrown in here and there. There are a handful of gems to be found, with the title track being the pick of the bunch for me. It's one of those songs which, from its first second, grabbed my attention and filled me with exuberance right the way to its completion. If you see me with my headphones in and I'm jerking and shaking like I'm being electrocuted as I walk along the street, then there's a good chance I'm listening to this album. –Rich Cocksedge (Luftslott)

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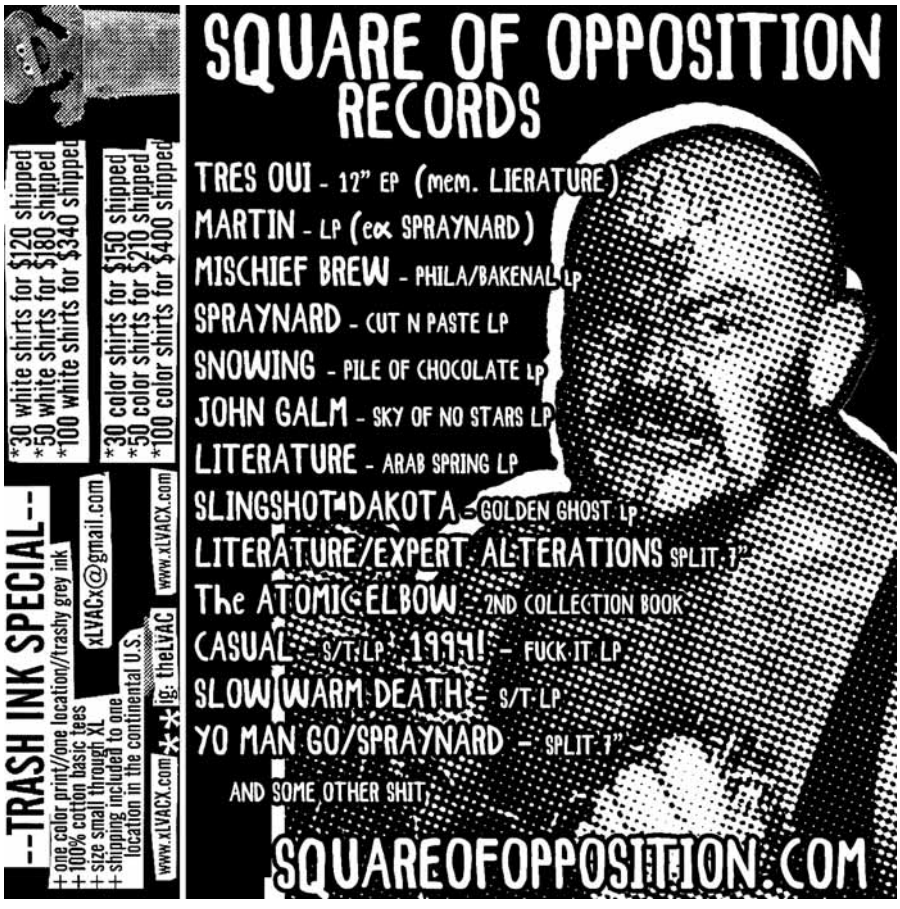
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SKEPTIC?: *Hornet's Nest:* LP
Newest (fifth? I don't know, I've lost count) long player from this long-running Alabama quartet-sometimes-quintet featuring members of good bands that you've probably never heard (Thik Chicken, Caustic Outlook). They've managed to churn out pretty much perfect meat-and-potatoes U.S. punk for over fifteen years now, and comparisons to Gang Green, the Freeze, Circle Jerks, et cetera all make sense. Remarkably catchy but simple punk with some real cool guitar leads with a clear but somewhat rough-around-the-edges recording. If this band would ever tour, they'd either explode or be relegated to bar crowds that might not quite catch how great they are, but that's really the charm about bands like these. –Ian Wise (Self-released)

SKIDS, THE: *Crooked Cop:* 7" EP
What we have here is the first offering from Melbourne's The Skids, which is one of those releases you're excited to get in your review pile, to say the least. Judging from the art/band name/songs titles/location, you already know what you're getting into. Very Aussie of the modern age: scuzz-covered, simple punk that's still catchy. A little Bits Of Shit and Cosmic Psychos, but with less of a hard edge, yet equal amounts of crud… maybe compared to something classic, like The Kids' *This is Rock'n Roll*. Whether they've heard of the Scottish band of the same name or not isn't really the point. This could easily be a record on Total Punk. It's a colossal pain to get records like this in Canada these days (where I'm from), so grab one while you can. –Steve Adamyk (Shipping Steel, shippingsteel.bigcartel.com)

SLAUGHTER RULE: Demo 2018: CS
While I do not abide the cassette format, this EP (as listened to online) hooked me after a couple listens. While I will always despise the intentionally lo-fi approach to recording and mixing (make the band sound as big as they do live!), I can still hear the energy and urgency of this Chicago band. Old school hardcore played proficiently and with an obvious knowledge and reverence of the past, but with relevant lyrics and a forceful vocal delivery that would have even more impact if not in the red. Catharsis via hardcore. Now, more than ever. –Chad Williams (Self-released, slaughterrule.bandcamp.com)

SLUGS: *Long Live the New Flesh:* CS
This wonderful five-song garage punk demo from Gothenburg, Sweden kicks off with a mid-tempo track before kicking into high gear with a hilarious Spits-inspired song about the movie *Videodrome*. Long live Slugs! I eagerly await a full-length from them, although in the meantime, this tape deserves 7" treatment. I adore this release! –Art Ettinger (Self-released, slugsgbg.bandcamp.com)

SLUSH: *Frog Water:* LP
If a young and angry Wayne Coyne had fronted the Butthole Surfers on their self-titled first release, you would have something somewhere in the ballpark of Slush. Art-damaged drug rock with enough hardcore vibe to not worry about them ever signing to a major or getting on your local college radio. No lyric sheet or freaked out art work (the band cover photo does include a penis-shaped water bottle), Slush just lets the music do the face melting. Translucent green cassette. –Matt Seward (Personal Militia, pmr.storenvy)

SOUTH BAY BESSIE: *Can't Skate:* CS
Like a split 7" I reviewed last issue, this recording is what's so fucking great about punk. Anyone from anywhere can write a killer punk song. Most don't, but once in a while, one of those "anyone"s does. Unless you're from Flint, Mich. (and how sad that the reason we all recognize the name of this otherwise typical Midwest city is its contaminated water disaster, which is *still* a problem four years down the line and is *still* virtually ignored), you've probably never heard of this unfortunately named band. What we have here is one great fucking punk rock song—the title track that I listened to ten times in a row, no joke—and a few more decent ones. Chixdiggit! And GG Allin's "NYC Tonight" are the touchstones for this gem of an ode to sucking at skating. –Chad Williams (Questionable Mono Tapes, southbaybessie.bandcamp.com)

SPECIAL MOVES: *March:* CS
The label is calling this "DIY Rock," which is a new one for me. This sound has always been either indie rock or noise pop in description. Described as "for Bob Mould fans" from the label; that would be fairly accurate. It's more lo-fi and there's less character in the vocals, but that is the general sound. Pretty good stuff overall, though the demo quality recording does get in the way a little. This stuff comes off much better when everything can be heard well and the lyrics and vocals stand out more. Members of the band Parasol are in this project, if that is of interest to you. –Mike Frame (Reflective, reflectivetapes.bandcamp.com)

SPEEDBUGGY USA: *Kick Out the Twang:* CD
A Los Angeles cowpunk band, this record is subtitled "13 Country Tracks." That's what you have here. Although I appreciated The Monkees cover to start things off, I started to fade out about halfway through the proceedings. It is well played and the band can certainly be classified as earnest. But as an album that I may pull out for repeated listens, it just wasn't up my alley. –Sean Koepenick (Self-released, kgmusicpress@gmail.com)

STATE OF FRANKLIN: *Mistakes Were Made:* CD
Simple punk rock with vocals that are largely spoken rather than shouted or sung. Lyrics are at turns topical and personal, but, on the whole, nothing

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really stuck in the noggin. –Jimmy Alvarado (Girth)

STRAFPLANET: *Freizeitstress:* LP
Ferocious hardcore from Graz, Austria that would send Bridge 9 fans scrambling for the exits as they pull their hoodies over their heads. No fucking around: the guitar hooks alone are fortuitous enough to speed you past nine songs in less than eleven minutes. Fans of No Statik and Punch can and should take heed: this is where it's fucking at. If 625 were still around, Max would have been all over this. –Juan Espinosa (Contraszt, diyordie.net)

STRUNG OUT: *Black Out the Sky:* CDEP
For a second, I could've sworn the wrong disc was cued up—one of those "is-this-a-manufacturing- error?" type of moments. After a little sleuthing, it turns out, nope, it's Strung Out alright. *Black Out the Sky* begins and carries forward as a full-blown acoustic rock record (emphasis on rock, e.g.: full band and electric instruments included), much to surprise, considering the band's lengthy track of consistency when it comes to style in their discography (as referenced in my previous review for *Transmission. Alpha.Delta* back in issue number 87). As one sits back and combs through the first few tracks, you expect the band will break out into their standard form at some point for sure, but it never happens. They really *are* doing this. But the real miracle here is that when so many bands of their ilk try and fail at this subgenre, Strung Out somehow pulls off this significant break in style. It isn't difficult to imagine the band pulling off songs like this musically. They're pros, after all. But to do it without sounding corny? Almost impossible. It would most likely end up sounding like Theory Of A Deadman or some bullshit, which isn't what we have here at all. Jason's voice guides the band always, but without his charm, I'm not sure *Black Out the Sky* would have the same effect. It's a shockingly enjoyable, well done record. And make no mistake, that's a huge compliment, since this could have gone horribly wrong if they were a different band. Fifteen years ago, when rock bands were still on the radio, this could have been a serious contender. Side note: eight tracks with three songs over four minutes is considered an EP? Maybe that's strategic, but if it looks and sounds like a full length, it is what it is. –Steve Adamyk
(Fat, fatwreck.com)

SUCK, THE: Self-titled: 7"
The Suck is from Harrisburg, Pa. and play genuine, straightforward pop punk and streetpunk, done to catchy perfection. As a five-piece, they have a full sound, with Screeching Weasel and Ramones-infused lead guitar lines that are never ever metal. "All We Know" is an instant anthem, kind of a major feat for a newish band to pull off on a debut record. The band members have punk aliases (The Cola, The Basement, The Dunk, The Problem, and The Alien), which is an underused gimmick. But they're far from a concept band, sticking to the basics in all of the right ways. Precisely what the punk doctor ordered, The Suck is a solid antidote to the overly grownup sounds of today. –Art Ettinger (Self-released, thesuckstreetrock.bandcamp.com)

SUEVES: *RIP Clearance Event:* LP
History repeats itself; if you wait long enough everything comes back around. Post early-'90s garage scene, there were a bunch of mutants playing deranged, fucked up, garage punk: Dead Boys on drugs. Scary fuckers, smashing bottles into their heads and the crowd. Bands like the Clone Defects, Piranhas, Epileptix et al scaring the living christ out of any poor fuck willing to go see them in whatever Midwest shithole dive bar they were annihilating. I *loved* that shit. Make punk scary again. I don't know shit about this lot, and for all I know they are a bunch of record squares aping an old sound. Fuck it, they have the sound *down*: fucked up, sneering, mutant garage punk. The sound that will/should knock your fucking teeth in. Maybe there's hope for the kids yet? –Tim Brooks
(Hozac, hozacrecords.com)

SUPERBEAN: *Shit Show:* CD
Fuck yes! Just what I needed, right when I needed it! Rickenbackers and Who-like target imagery tricked me into thinking this was going to be some neo-mod bullshit, but the trashy chords of the first track "Marisol" came crashing down around me and I then smiled, knowing that this was going to be a rousing affair indeed. Poppy in just the right places and punky in others, these guys know what works. The lyrics tend to stay in observational mode which suits the music just fine; no deep political treatise needed here. These guys apparently used to be called Bean but being new and improved they are now Superbean. Whatever the case, I'm smitten. "Fuck Youth" is already in heavy rotation at casa de Barnwell and I have a feeling the whole CD will be spinning at many weekenders throughout the summer. –Garrett Barnwell (Self-released)

TIGER SEX: *Weirdo:* CD
Gutter-level punk rock, emphasis on the latter, dripping with sleaze 'n' attitude. Easily see 'em gracing R.A.F.R. or Deadbeat Records comps a decade or two back. They do the sound justice and I'm sure they rip live. –Jimmy Alvarado (Tiger Sex, tigersex.info)

TORGO: *Torgo Vs God:* CD
The existence of bands that identify with the no-wave movement that (seemingly) lost favor forty years ago continues to surprise me. Torgo falls firmly within the movement's reaches, filling tracks with punk-inspired experimentation that evokes memories of, say, DNA, or Teenage Jesus And The Jerks. Tracks like "Prie-Dieu" and "Smayday" are the most rocking

and conventional on the album (while still heavily experimenting vocally and instrumentally), while "Foist" might feature some of the most interesting vocals and instrumentation on the record. The band chooses to eschew instrumentation on much of "Housecat Pushing Paintings off of the Wall to Find the Animal Rustling." Generally, this record is composed of screeching guitar sounds and droning havoc that cement the band's overarching "weirdness." Though definitively boundary pushing, this record sounds self-indulgent from time to time. Those interested in experimental composition would probably enjoy the arrangements on this record, but I occasionally found myself feeling a little sick of the sound throughout it. –Anna Farr (Self-released, ogrot.bandcamp.com/album/torgo-vs-god)

TRACYS, THE: *Humdinger:* CD
New York is a tough city for punk rock these days. The birthplace of our beloved brand of rock'n'roll—Ramones, The Dictators, The Heartbreakers—has been a wasteland for straight-up, snotty punk rock like this for quite some time. The Tracys don't do anything groundbreaking or exceptional, but it's undeniably refreshing to hear a band play this sort of punk rock in 2018. It's proof that while you may only be working with three or four chords, there's still a way to write a cool, catchy tune that isn't an obvious rip off. Ramones, Circle Jerks, and Dead Kennedys vibes permeate this album. –Chad Williams (Self-released, thetracys.bandcamp.com)

TRASH MONKEYS: Self-titled: 7" EP
A new 45 from an obscure Florida band active in the 1980s. The four tracks here, I'm assuming recorded back then (there ain't much information included other than a note that two members went on to form noise punk darlings Harry Pussy), bounce between noisy proto-hardcore and stuff that would've fit well on Dr. Demento's long-running show. Quirky, sure, but not without its charms. –Jimmy Alvarado (Almost Ready)

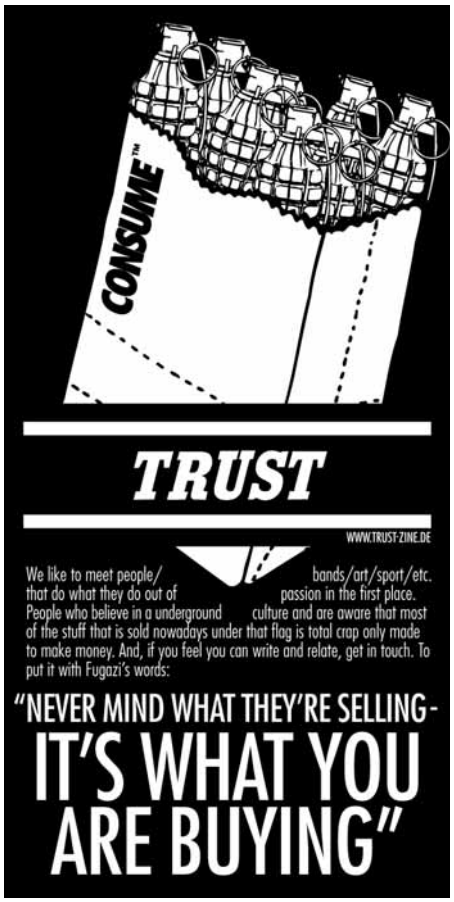
TRASH STREET: *Live at BBQ Laundromat:* CD
If you like fuzzy garage rock with some tight hooks, there's plenty of treasure to be found in Trash Street. The Minneapolis quintet cranks through ten tracks of noodly, jangly goodness on *Live at BBQ Laundromat*. The album opens with the slow-burning "Golden Gate," but picks up in intensity as the album progresses. The climax for me is the track "Books on Witchcraft," featuring a catchy lick and some great guitar leads. It's a perfect track to include on a playlist for some witchy fall road trips. –Paul J. Comeau (facebook.com/trashstreetsect)

TRASH: *Version 2/Live on KCSB:* CS
I still hate tapes. I'm sure glad I can usually check the tunes out online to write the reviews. I don't hate Trash, however. They are a heavy-as-fuck hardcore band from Oxnard, Calif. Does just being from Oxnard make you a Nardcore band? These are seriously the things I wonder about. Comes across a little too metal for my tastes in parts, but not enough to turn it off. The live on the radio portion is pretty rough sounding though… Yeah, I'm turning it off now. –Ty Stranglehold (So This Is Progress, sothisisprogress.bandcamp.com/album/trash)

TRIGGER HAPPY: *I'll Shut Up When You Fuck Off:* LP
Toronto's Trigger Happy (or The Almighty Trigger Happy as they're alternately known) were an amazing band that I was fortunate enough to see play many times through the mid-'90s. I find it incredibly exciting that some of their records are getting reissued (and on vinyl too!). This is the band's fourth album (yes, I count the *Uncooler* tape Al!) and it marks a distinct sound change for the band. Previous recordings featured a sound that was decidedly more in the ALL or Big Drill Car wheelhouse. This one takes the same song structure but adds a healthy heaping dose of huge, galloping drums and ripping guitar leads a la Good Riddance or SNFU. Add in the relentless vocal delivery of Al Nolan and the result is amazing! If you are unaware of this Canadian treasure, you best be searching them out. –Ty Stranglehold (Chase The Glory)

TRIGGER HAPPY: *Killatron 2000:* LP
I have another review that might be right above this one that explains a bit about Trigger Happy. They're a band I have loved for a long time. The first time I saw them play was opening for Bad Brains in a barn in rural British Columbia in 1993. I was hooked. *Killatron 2000* came out the following year and remains my favorite Trigger Happy album. Musically, I consider the sound to be what I would imagine a collaboration between SNFU and Big Drill Car (two of the best bands ever!). Vocalist Al Nolan is a hero of mine. So snide and angry yet you feel a bit of vulnerability under there. It is hard for me to express how happy I am to see this released on vinyl for the first time! Go on and get yourself a copy. Tell 'em Stranglehold sent you! –Stranglehold (Chase The Glory)

TRITA: *The Good Night:* CD
Ken: "Post-rock for a thousand." Alex: "Trita." Ken: "What is: Russian Circles with vocals?" Alex: "That is correct." While I've never even remotely liked or obliged the classification of music as "post-" anything (every type of music precedes and succeeds other types of music in a connective line; proto- and post- designations just seem fucking lazy), it unfortunately persists as a descriptor of music that is still most definitely "rock." Yet, even more unfortunately, this category has a certain sonic recognizability and thus, the term persists. Trita do indeed play a form of rock music, likely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influenced by hardcore and metal, that sounds immediately similar to the aforementioned instrumental trio, but—you know—with singing. And they do a fair job of it. The impassioned vocals seamlessly meld with the dark, rhythmic music that the drums, bass, and guitar weave together on all four tracks. An enjoyable listen, post-work, post-school, post-sleep or, you know, the present. –Chad Williams (Self-released, trita.bandcamp.com)

UNCOMMITTED THE: Self-titled: CS
The Uncommitted matches hardcore riffing with gruff, aggressive vocals and the instrumentation of a lap steel guitar. Despite the horrors one may expect from such a combination, this record was actually a relatively painless listen. The lap-steel wail tends to come through as an accentuation of apposite guitar riffing, and gets especially interesting in tracks like "Autosite/Parasite" and "John Brown's Dream" as a medium for a more experimental sound that probably couldn't be achieved with conventional instruments. The novelty is used wisely, and this is otherwise an angry and entertaining punk record for fans of gruff vocals. I enjoyed this release, and listeners into a little experimentation in a mix probably would too. –Anna Farr (Self-released, uncommitted.bandcamp.com)

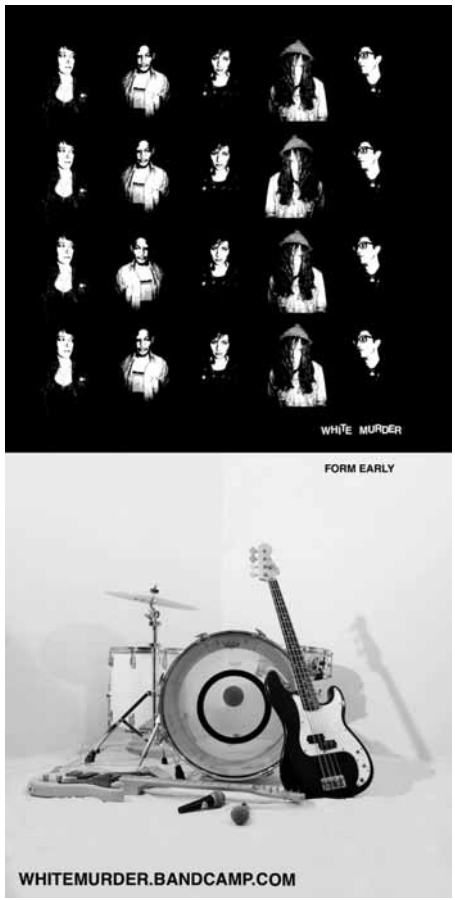
USUALS, THE:
***Earth Sucks, We're Out:* LP**
I'm very much attracted to bands with good lyrics first and good licks second. The Usuals, while leaving quite a bit to be desired in the lyrics for me, do drive a hard bargain by being really enjoyable to listen to. It's not that the vocalist makes it difficult to discern the words he's singing, but it wasn't until the third listen that I realized the first song was about India pale ales. They're certainly not the first nor the last punk band to write a ballad to a beer—but for what it is, the song is good. The Usuals are from Chicago and there is certainly a Windy City melting pot in their sound. At times they're sonic doppelgängers for Naked Raygun and it's awesome. Other times, I hear a lot of Denis Buckley and 88 Fingers Louie coming through. And a few times I get a bit of Bollweevils. I imagine these guys have grown up listening to, playing with, and going to the shows of those Chicagoan stalwarts and picked up a thing or two along the way. I wish their topics covered more than drinking, drugging, scene policing, and being broke, but that's just me. Really great record for background music. And hey! Deanna Belos of Sincere Engineer does backup vocals on one of the songs! –Kayla Greet (Self-released)

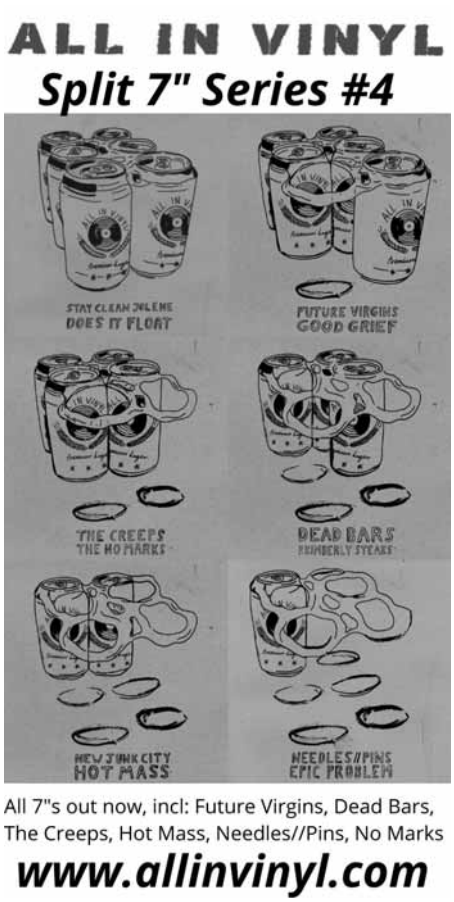
VAMOS: *1 2 3:* LP
Garage punk with a bit o' pop thrown in the blender. There's a professionalism to their delivery, but it adds a sheen to the garage-gruff rather than making them sound disingenuous. Not bad at all. –Jimmy Alvarado (Maximum Pelt)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Get Out of My Club–The Manges Tribute Album:* LP
European pop punk from the '90s on out was derivative to a fault; Italian pop punk was derivative to the point of insanity (one of their more prominent outfits back in the day was actually named "Stinking Polecat." I rest my case). The Manges were probably at the head of the Italian pop punk class, but whether that makes them some sort of exception that proves some sort of rule or just the most divine turd in the punch bowl is likely a matter of how far down the rabbit hole the listener finds themselves these days. The continued regurgitation of Screeching Weasel/Queers tidbits didn't do much for me fifteen or twenty years ago, and the fact that there are at least seventeen bands out there willing to regurgitate the regurgitations in this day and age is cause for either head-shaking and hand-wringing or a big party where everybody wears tight jeans and their best horizontally-striped shirt, depending on your position relative to the rabbit hole. With the exception of the Hiroshima's amazing So-Cho Pistons, these songs don't sound like covers, or even like they're being performed by different bands— perhaps I think this because I'm not listening closely enough, but if you wanted to suggest that perhaps that's because all the bands sound the same, I certainly wouldn't stop you. If you like this sort of thing, you'll love it. If you hate it, you'll consider keeping it around because of the amazing *Rock 'n' Roll High School* tribute cover. BEST SONG So-Cho Pistons, "Uncle Walt." BEST SONG TITLE: "Secret Agent in East Berlin." FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: You can't really hate a record with the Banana Splits on the cover. –Rev. Nørb (Mom's Basement)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:
***Horrendous New Wave:* LP**
It took me some time to get around to buying this comp. I'm surprised I was still able to find one when I went looking, as these Lumpy Records releases don't stay on the shelves for long. There's something about this compilation (which I like very much) that makes me feel most of these bands are one-offs, rather than ongoing. There's nothing wrong with having a small project focused on writing songs for a specific genre (in this case: wave-y, keyboard-y, squiggly) but it's always unfortunate when a song or two is the only thing that will remain of that venture. Some of the band names (Dequantize, Sexual Christians, Neuro Bliss) are as good as the song titles ("I Don't Wanna Indoor Toilet," "I Am Not a Nixon"). I recognized some contributors, including Rik (from Rik And The Pigs) as well as Lumpy himself. I'm sure there are more, but I've been out of the Lumpy loop for a bit. –Sal Lucci (Lumpy, lumpyrecords.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:
***NW Punk Whatever #1:* EP**
This is the first release from Tiny Dragon records—the brainchild of





Drew Smith and Adam France of Burn Burn Burn, so of course they're going to be on it! Actually the Burn Burn Burn song "Amber" is a nice complement to the opening track, "One Step Closer to the Thunderdome" from Kids On Fire. Both songs are fast as hell—great leads, gruff and gravely vocals, with some "whoa-ohs" and sing-a-long choruses that take over your short term memory pretty quickly. The B-side comes to us from Rat City Ruckus and Ten Pole Drunk. Again, two songs that fall in line with the first two, but also have elements that are uniquely their own, though definitely more sing-songy; tracks about drinking, which has a minor reoccurring role on this comp. Punks writing songs about being drunk? Crazy, I know. I suggest you snag a copy of this, some forties, and a bunch of friends. Though also bring along a six pack and a copy of Rancid's *Life Won't Wait* because A) it's a short EP and you'll need more to drink/listen to, and B) these bands sound a lot like what Rancid would be if they grew up in rainy, overcast Seattle instead of spending all that time in the sun—a little watered down and a little less cheery? –Kayla Greet (Tiny Dragon)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:
NW Punk Whatever #2: **EP**
This compilation has some of the best bands in the Seattle area that are currently active. Besides No Guts, who I was unaware of before listening to this comp, I go to see the rest of these bands ninety-five percent of the time they're playing in the city. Ramona has moved to Philly, so I have less of a chance of seeing them now. But Choke The Pope and 'Ol Doris are bands I never get tired of. All of these are songs that are previously unreleased, though the Choke The Pope track will be out on their next record. The compilation starts off with a catchy and raucous song from Ramona about insomnia. Thanks for being the next song that gets stuck in my head when I'm going to bed now! Choke The Pope's track is next and it's incredibly infectious. The lyrics that stick out the most for me are: "I have a pretty good life / I smoke weed and watch TV / And get paid $20 an hour to put milk on a shelf." It's so simple and dumb. I just fucking love it. Then No Guts hits us with a track that could easily be a secret B side for *Sentimental Ward*, *Volatile Molotov*, or *The People Are Home*. Somehow it's a mix of Toys That Kill, The Arrivals, and Underground Railroad To Candyland all at once. And, finally, 'Ol Doris shouts out a Dee Dee-level "1-2-3-4!" count and launches into their song "Enough." It's fraught with killer minor chords and driving rhythm guitar, "woohoo"s, and nonstop back beat with gruff vocals blanketing the whole mix. Four great bands with four great songs makes for a helluva comp. –Kayla Greet (Tiny Dragon)

VÄRLDEN BRINNER: ***Slöseri av Tid:*** **LP**
Another day, another grand musical discovery from Sweden in the form of Världen Brinner, an outfit with a penchant for well-crafted songs delivered in an energetic manner. Regardless of how sharp the songs sound, it's Malin Sandberg's vocals that provide the icing on the cake, with her ability to lead the quintet on its musical journey. Musically, it's a blend of punk and rock which allows the band to combine either equally or lean more towards one than the other. This keeps things fresh and results in a damn good record. –Rich Cocksedge (Luftslott, info@luftslottrecords.com, luftslottrecords.com)

VÄRLDEN BRINNER: ***Slöseri av Tid:*** **LP**
Part standard octave-chord punk and part hit-machine rock. They start off in Fat Wreck/Epitaph mode but by "Pa Gatan" ("On the Street"). They're like anthemic Swedish Pat Benatar punk. I did not know I wanted to hear that kind of thing, but I did. International pop punk heads, please take notice. –Matt Werts (Luftslott, luftslottrecords.com)

VEUVE S.S.: ***Traître à Tout:*** **LP**
French hardcore with more than tinge of metal mixed in. Things are moody, dark, and infused with an intensity that helps allay the sameness that is its ultimate output. –Jimmy Alvarado (Nerdcore, nerdcorerecords.blogspot.com)

VOICE TO THE USELESS:
Noise Without Instrument: **Floppy Disc**
Well, at least it's not on fucking cassette. BEST SONG TITLE: "No Knobs, No Masters." FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: From the lyric sheet: *"Click click click click click click click, ooo chwoochwoochw dddddd weeeoooweeeooo, Naah ah ah ah oh, nah ah ah ah oh."* I don't know, all that futile clicking makes it sound more like an iOmega ZIP disc than a floppy disc. –Rev. Nørb (Dark Water, darkwaterrecords.bandcamp.com)

WARNING: DANGER!:
Shovel to the Face: **CD**
There's not a single serious song on this whole record. Warning: Danger! are a four piece from Seattle who dress up in reflective safety gear usually only found on road workers or the Village People. Most of the songs trudge along at a stoner metal band's pace, which is super apt on the song "Puff, Puff, Give" for example (though the rest of the tracks are all over the place lyrically). My favorite song title is "I Dropped Acid and Forgot It Was Halloween." How fucking scary and ridiculous is that? Another top contender for best song title is "My Baby's Got Rabies." I found myself chuckling as they asked the fictional significant other why she was so thirsty. Then there are lyrical gems like the couplet in "Space Camp" that goes: "High fives in zero Gs / That sounds like fun to me!" That song is actually a cover from a band called Sump Pumps, but I imagine Warning: Danger! put a nice spin on it. The last track is a live recording and they start out by asking the crowd the name of the ninth planet in the solar system, all the while chanting "Pluto is a planet,

goddamnit!" and "Fuck you NASA!" Or the song "Bacon" where they cover both the food and famous people named Bacon. It's just silliness across the board that will put a smile on your face. –Kayla Greet (Self-released)

WHO KILLED SOCIETY: Self-titled: LP
This is a long-lost LP from a short-lived band that's being lauded as "Montana's First Punk Band." Having no real knowledge of punk from Big Sky Country, I have no reason to dispute it. After having been kicked out of Just Ducky where he played with Steve Albini, the guitarist/front dude went on to form Who Killed Society and wrote sort of a fuck you letter to mainstream rock of the early '80s. I know that these days Steve Albini will engineer/produce/et cetera any band's record who can foot the bill, but this record here is one of the earliest that he'd ever worked on (having been recorded in 1981, two years before Big Black started). The music is incredibly despondent and noisy. It reminds me a lot of that Bauhaus-y post punk sound, but with a shit-ton of Hüsker Dü and Replacements thrown in. While it's easily a day's drive from Montana to Minneapolis and it's not likely these guys were inspired by anything more than a desire to be loud and different, Who Killed Society would have fit right in on a bill with The 'Mats, and maybe Mission Of Burma. Lots of distorted, busy guitar work over low register vocals, and a bang-up rhythm section. – Kayla Greet (Ten Club)

WILD ANIMALS: *The Hoax:* LP/CD
This is the follow up to the excellent *Basements: Music to Fight Hypocrisy*, an album which flooded my head with melody, a bit of power, and some of the best songs I'd heard in ages. Having been fortunate enough to see Wild Animals live last year, my admiration was firmly cemented as the band tore through songs I loved and gave them even more vitality and impact. *The Hoax* continues in the same vein as its predecessor and is a collection of songs that have a '90s indie rock quality to them. Jamie Ruiz's guitar bleeds a warm fuzziness which embraces me whole and his voice tells tales that I eagerly lap up. The album kicks off with the hugely infectious "Lost in Translation," recounting the band's Japanese tour last year and is one of ten tracks which make for a perfect listening experience. If it were possible to get tattoos on your heart then I'd have Wild Animals done on mine. This is a bloody great record! –Rich Cocksedge (Lauren, aaron@lauren-records.com, lauren-records.com / Bcore, bcore@bcoredisc.com, bcoredisc.com / La Agonia De Vivr, laagoniadevivir.com / Pifia, pifia.records@gmail.com, pifiarecords.bandcamp.com / Inhumano, inhumano.bigcartel.com / Epidemic, epidemicrecords@hotmail.com, epidemicrecords.net / Waterslide, waterslideerecords.bandcamp.com)

WILD ZEROS: *Motormouth:* 7"
Wild Zeros are from Bordeaux, France and they are led by a zany vocalist with a spastic lilt to his voice that will either annoy or engross you. I find him endearing. The songs could lean towards a fairly typical garage routine, but the insane voice carries the day. Weird and fun, Wild Zeros are precisely the sort of band that keeps the garage scene interesting. –Art Ettinger (Nerve Centre, nervecentrerecords.com)

WITCHTRIAL: *Demo 2017:* 12"
The lure of metal is undeniable. With increasing regularity, lifelong punks are unapologetically embracing metal, without shedding an ounce of punk rock credibility. Sometimes the pull of raw aggression and pure evil is too much to resist, especially when compared with some of the pop and alterna-rock that's passing for punk these days. Witchtrial has hardcore punk in its blood, but blasts out four songs of stripped-down metal. Think Midnight, *Show No Mercy*, Inepsy, Venom, et al. –Chad Williams (Beach Impediment, beachimpedimentrecords.blogspot.com)

WOLVES OF THE DRY RAVINE: *Play with Matches near the Powder Keg:* LP
I'm sympathetic to singers who can't sing, and I agree with David Byrne's quote that goes something like, "The better a singer's voice, the harder it is to believe what they're saying." But Wolves Of The Dry Ravine's effortless, smart, charming garage punk and their well-intentioned, if blandly stated, politically/socially aware message are marred by truly tuneless vocals. It's a frustrating listen; they're nailing it and they're not nailing it. I believe them but I don't want to hear them. –Matt Werts (Stepdads / Big Neck)

WRETCHED SIGHTS, THE: *Heathen Help Us:* 7" EP
Tight, fast thrash with gruff vocals. Songs are sometimes on the long side for the style (two and a half minutes? Who are they, the Mahavishnu Orchestra?!?), but they keep things interesting throughout so's ye don't really feel it. Thumbs up. –Jimmy Alvarado (Wretched Sights, facebook.com/thewretchedsights)

YOUNG ROCHELLES, THE: Self-titled: LP
Matching striped tees and pristine Ramones leather jackets on the Young Rochelles' band photo album cover pretty much clue you in as to what to audibly expect. Sugar sweet buzzsaw pop with fun titles like "Coffee in the Dog Dish," "My Stomach Hates My Guts," and "I Never Saw the Ramones." Third-wave Queers worship done arguably well, probably ridiculously fun to play, but ultimately unmemorable. –Matt Seward (Sounds Rad, soundsradical.com)

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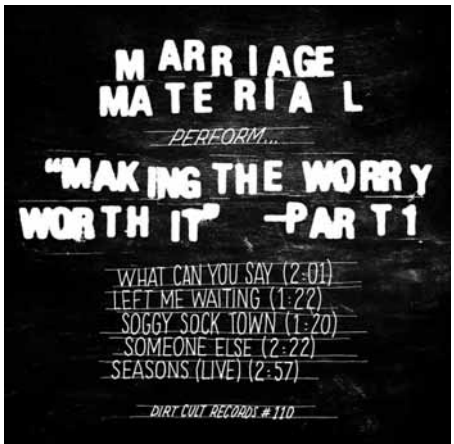

"Damn it, I thought they really were three brothers! Anyway, here's five songs of fuzzy, rough-hewn punk stuff with melodies buried deep down there beneath the grit, bright guitar leads flashing out here and there." -Keith Rosson

"Why do people always say you aren't brothers?" -our father

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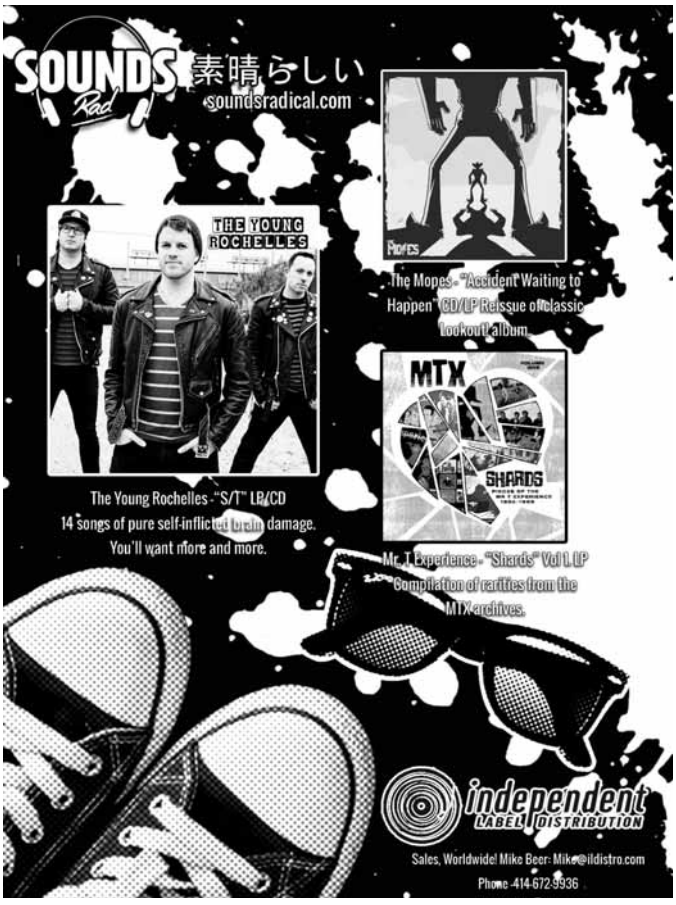
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3005 South Lamar, D109-403, Austin, TX 78704
• **Almost Ready**,
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Brooklyn, NY 11231
• **Altercation**,
PO Box 685333,
Austin, TX 78768
• **Bcore**,
Montmany 25, 08012
Barcelona, Spain
• **Beach Impediment**,
PO Box 26348,
Richmond, VA 23260
• **Belladonna**
c/o Jason Teisinger,
6619 SE 14th Ln.,
Gainesville, FL 32641
• **Big Neck**,
39877 Thomas Mill Rd.,
Leesburg, VA 20175
• **Boss Tuneage**,
PO Box 124, Belford,
Northumberland, NE66 9EE, United Kingdom
• **Chase The Glory**,
51 Baldwin St. (Upper),
Whitby, ON, L1M 1A3,
Canada
• **Cinedelic**,
Via Emilia Romagna 41,
Cattolica, Emilia-Romagna,
Italy
• **Concrete Jungle**
c/o Feral Media,
PO Box 810 427,
90249 Nürnberg,
Germany

• **Contraszt**,
Wippermannstrasse 12,
51103 Köln, Germany
• **Crypt**,
Julius-Leber-Str. 20, 22765
Hamburg, Germany
• **Deranged**
c/o Gordon Dufrense, 2700
Lower Rd., Roberts Creek,
BC, V0N 2W4 Canada
• **Dig**,
212C Loudoun St. SE,
Leesburg, VA 20175
• **Dirt Cult**,
7930 NE Prescott St.,
Portland, OR 97218
• **Dischord**,
3819 Beecher St. NW,
Washington, DC 20007
• **Don Giovanni**,
PO Box 628,
Kingston, NJ 08528
• **Dusty Medical**,
PO Box 1981,
Milwaukee, WI 53201
• **Exotic Aquatic**,
1707 E. 11th St.,
Davenport, IA 52803
• **Fat Wreck Chords**,
2196 Palou Ave.,
SF, CA 94124
• **Feel It**,
PO Box 25045,
Richmond, VA 23260
• **FTWNU2**,
PO Box 822,
Hopkins, MN 55343
• **Girth**, PO Box 13,
Geneva, NY 14456

• **Goner**,
2152 Young Ave.,
Memphis, TN 38104
• **Happy Happy Birthday To Me**,
PO Box 742,
Athens, GA 30603
• **Hozac**,
6001 Gross Point Rd.,
Niles, IL 60714
• **Hundemann**,
Höfflingerweg 4, 48153
Münster, Germany
• **In The Red**,
PO Box 50777,
LA, CA 90050
• **Iron Lung**,
PO Box 80172,
Seattle, WA 98108
• **It's Alive**,
11411 Hewes St.,
Orange, CA 92869
• **Luftslott**
c/o Lindkvist,
Furuvagen 10, 91335
Holmsund, Sweden
• **Maximum Pelt**,
3653 W. Fullerton Ave. #2,
Chicago, IL 60647
• **Mutant Rock**,
PO Box 810 427, 90249
Nürnberg, Germany
• **Questionable Mono Tapes**, 2506 Blaine Ave. SE,
Grand Rapids, MI 49507
• **Red Scare**,
c/o Tobias Jeg, 4625 Hazel Ave. Apt. 1F, Philadelphia,
PA 19143

• **Salinas**,
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• **Secret Mission**,
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Pittsburgh, PA 15228
• **See My Friends**,
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Daphne, AL 36526
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• **Smog Veil**,
1521 Alton Rd. #625,
Miami Beach, FL 33139
• **Snappy Little Numbers**,
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• **Sounds Rad**,
5203 Columbia Rd., Suite A,
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• **Spinefarm**,
PO Box 212, 00181
Helsinki, Finland
• **Superior Viaduct**,
PO Box 193563,
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PO Box 6592,
Cleveland, OH 44101
• **Voodoo Rhythm**,
Wankdorffeldstrasse 92,
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Happy 35th birthday, *MRR*!

–Jim Joyce
MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL #420

100 PUNKS $5, 4¼" x 5½", LaserJet, 20 pgs.
This mini zine by Robert has a great sampling of his online project, 100 Punks. There are some gems in there, with awesome back stories, and plenty of people of color. One of my favorites is the punk who disappeared and hasn't been seen in a while. None of his friends know where he is but when a new horror movie hits, he's bound to be there. Plus there's some dope comics in the back of the zine. Do you feel lucky, punk? –Iggy Nicklbottum (RobertMakes.com)

BROKE BITCH ZINE #1, $10, 5½" x 8½", copied, 22 pgs.
I'm constantly broke in one way or another. Sometimes you have to take that shitty job and roll with it to pay even the smallest of bills. This zine has several stories you can connect to on how being broke and making that hustle work can really stress you out, and how you can feel all that relief by also purging your hatred along with everyone in here. Being a broke woman/femme in a capitalist society is a different experience as well, so this zine itself can give you a look into this world. Alma and Alex have edited an interesting, funny, and wonderful zine, and I'm stoked to look at the next one. –Iggy Nicklbottum (Alma Rosa and Alex Beehive, IG: chicana_catwomxn)

CANCER CARE, donation, 4¼" x 5½", copied, 34 pgs.
A donation-based zine that has all the proper information for anyone who needs help in several factors of dealing with cancer. It has sections for support groups, places that work specifically in make-up for cancer patients, scarves, fashion for patients, et cetera. This zine was made with absolute love, and every page is illustrated in the most beautiful illustrations. It also has little guides to being a good support, and it's good for people who just really panic when someone is dealing with a serious problem. This is a good resource to have just in case. –Iggy Nicklbottum (Elise Bernal, elisebee.etsy.com)

DON'T OVERTHINK WHAT FEELS GOOD, $?, 5½" x 8½", copied, 24 pgs.
Twin Cities artist, poet, and zinester Archie Bongiovanni is back in this hot pink poetry volume. With a custom-printed condom affixed to the back, this is one saucy zine. "Reckless Libido Paired with Emotional Immaturity," the condom reads, a kind of mantra for the poems within. An examination of trans, queer, digital sexuality, the poems detail the whole range of sexual and romantic tension: rage, desperation, the wish that you could have a potential partner mailed to you by Amazon Prime. "Swipe right on life!" Archie urges. Their outlook on life is at times bleak in this collection, but at the end of it all, you can't overthink what feels good. *Don't Overthink What Feels Good* is a zine you can certainly judge by its cover. That is, it's heartbreaking, heartwarming, sexy, and engaging. Plus, it's hot pink, so who wouldn't want to add it to their collection? –Jimmy Cooper (Twitter @grease_bat, IG: @babywrist)

EGON FOREVER! #1, 25¢, 6 ½" x 10", offset, 30 pgs.
Imagine a crudely drawn, wide-eyed bunny. Now imagine that cute li'l bunny in a three-panel comic, each panel with the exact same bunny picture, except in the last one the bunny has a thought bubble that says, "FUCK!!! THE COPS!!!" I know you're having to visualize something that's right in front of me, but I'm sure you can understand how that could be funny. If you don't, you're probably not going to enjoy these comics. It was right up my alley, though, and I think you'll like it. Said bunny comic is the pièce de résistance here as far as drawings go, because the rest of the comic resorts to stickmen and stickwomen as the vehicle for Egon's sense of humor and wit. It's very silly and very funny. And it's a steal at 25¢. This glossy, normal comic-sized comic, seriously, only costs a quarter. I'm not sure how they're doing it, but it's well worth that. –Craven Rock (Andre Lux, 2018, Stuttgart, Germany, foreveregon@yahoo.de, egonforever.de)

FIXER ERASER #2, $3, 5½" x 8½", copied, 24 pgs.
Fixer Eraser is a short "zine of odds and ends" that features small writings from different narrators' perspectives, all searching for something in one way or another. Sometimes it could be a form of escapism, sometimes it's what their true purpose is in life, other times it's just the companionship of a like-minded individual. All the voices (even though written by one person) seem to be longing for a part of themselves to be erased or put back together. A thought-provoking read, I read back through it a couple times, finding bits of myself in the different pieces. –Tricia Ramos (Fixer Eraser, PO Box 633, Chicago, IL 60690, bubba.mahoney@gmail.com)

FIXER ERASER #4, $3, 5 ½" x 8", copied, 26 pgs.
Jonas's latest issue of *Fixer Eraser* finds him spinning tales that cross the line between fiction and non-fiction. He shares stories of, amongst other things, wanting to help others, asking for writing advice, speaking with a deceased friend, and giving counsel to his child. It's a short read but the prose hits hard in its ability to bring up some strong memories and create moving dialogue. It also covers important topics. If you've liked the past issues of the zine, it's worth picking up. –Kurt Morris (Jonas, PO Box 633, Chicago, IL 60690)

FLUKE #15, $5, 5½" x 8½", copied, 44 pgs.
Dudes, I fucked up big time. *Fluke* honcho Matthew Thompson nudged me a while back to submit something for his new issue, and I was like oh yeah, totally. And I forgot. Then a few months later the fifteenth installment of the venerable institution arrived, with great interviews with Mike Watt, Ian MacKaye, and Gary Floyd (by Erica Dawn Lyle of *Scam* zine, no less), Linda Kite's print debut, and good writing by Jessie Lynn McManis. And I didn't contribute anything. I could have been in there, elbow to elbow with all the heavy hitters: *I coulda been a contender*! But *no*! I blew a chance to be in the best issue of *Fluke* yet *for no good reason*. This is an egregious error on my part, one that will haunt me for the rest of my woebegone days. But don't take my word for it: check the new ish and marvel at how awesome it is and ruefully shake your head at the bozo who dropped the ball. –Michael T. Fournier (PO Box 1547, Phoenix, AZ 85001)

FLUORAZINE #3, Free/trade 5½" x 8½", copied, 40 pgs.
In *Fluorazine*, Kit Brixton writes from what I think is a prison out in Kentucky, and if I'm reading right, they take submissions from other incarcerated folks. This issue includes collaged comics repurposed from other publications and a clipping from another magazine's article about Betty Saar's assemblage pieces that "challenged racist and sexist African American stereotypes"—think *mammy* tropes and "Jim Crow-era imagery." Ripping a piece from another publication and dropping it in your own is a fun move, and it speaks to *Fluorazine*'s vibe: scrappy, rollicking, and raw. I dug the "fuckton of" haikus—"Hopes Audacity / A Sleepy Cigarette Smile / Accidental Pimp"—and what I take to be Kit Brixton's note on loving University of Kentucky's radio station, WRFL.FM, which has a pretty good punk rotation. Brixton tries keeping an open mind when the station plays EDM, but it ain't easy: "In my day," they write, "music was about dressing up like women and singing about heroin and the devil!" So yeah, a fun read, and good reminder that "prison is more than a still life picture. Nothing is absolutely still." –Jim Joyce (Kristopher Storey, 26731-018 FMC, PO Box 14500, Lexington, KY 40512)

HOPELESS CITY #2: THE MAYDAY ISSUE, Free, 8½" x 8½", copied, 12 pgs.
Hopeless City is a seemingly regular publication brand new to the Twin Cities zine scene. Branded in jest as a lifestyle magazine, the front cover reads "MY MAGAZINE IS BETTER THAN *THE CITY PAGES*!" and further down, "(BUT REALLY THO—FUCK *THE CITY PAGES*)." The cover is cheeky and fun; it sets the tone for the zine. The first entry is "Town Gossip," preceded by a warning that some of these things are true and some are not. I'd refer to the whole zine as a romp if I wanted to sound like a jackass. I don't, so I'll just say

it's funny and invaluable if you live in or around the Twin Cities. Contributions from anyone are accepted, which is part of the charm and how you end up with a review of MTV's *Catfish,* "Learning from Our Mistakes Horoscope," and a psychiatrist's office missed connection in the same zine. I also really dig the square, slightly large size, which isn't too far off from standard but still makes it stand out. Overall, *Hopeless City* is a solid cut-and-paste aesthetic, has solid content, and is a solid zine! –Jimmy Cooper (hopelesscityzine@gmail.com)

I FEEL WEIRD #3, $8, 5½" x 8", copied, 34 pgs.
The new issue of *I Feel Weird* hits hard. This comic is about Haleigh's life and her experiences with anxiety, depression, and suicide. It may not sound enticing but it's incredibly moving and relatable (at least for those of us dealing with mental illness). The drawing is incredibly detailed and reminiscent of R. Crumb. I can't imagine the time it must take Haleigh to put an issue together, but it's totally worth it. This issue continues her journey back from her suicide attempt and trying to find a therapist. She also recounts her childhood and shares a history of psychotherapy. It's not for the faint of heart, but for those with resolve to see it through and who are comfortable with topics like suicide and depression, this is worth every penny. I can't think of a better comic I've read about mental health. As the hardcore kids used to say, get this or pose. –Kurt Morris (Haleigh Buck, 2700 Academy Dr., Westminster, MD 21157)

JUST ENCASED Volume 1, $7, 5½" x 8½", printed, 8 pgs.
This black and white mini-zine is a short comic featuring a hot dog narrator. It's pretty cutesy in its subject matter and the talking hot dog is likable (for a hot dog, I guess?). I would wager this would do well as a children's book, purchased by parents who like puns and tongue-in-cheek jokes. –Tricia Ramos (Just Encased, daniellesusi.com, dsusi@saic.edu)

MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL #420, $4.99, 8½" x 11½", newsprint, 103 pgs.
Another good'n from Berkeley, issue 420 features a Tim Yohannan remembrance and a dispatch from the Bay Area Girls Rock Camp. It feels a bit odd for *MRR* founder Yohannan to get a remembrance now (died in 1998), but maybe this is the publication's way to acknowledge they've hit their 35th anniversary, a milestone otherwise unmentioned. Thanks to my friend Paul for pointing that out to me. Anyway, who was Tim? He loved playing Risk, he pursued band mailing addresses tirelessly. Maybe he was a Stalinist. He wasn't everyone's favorite. He "saved the lives of weirdos." Bay Area Girls Rock Camp is at year ten, and one interview with a BAGRC group, Lil Debbie, made a cool point that I sure wasn't thinking of when I was a tween or teen: "punk is dominated by straight white men," says Liv of Little Debbie And The Crusaders. "And if you don't fit one or more of those descriptions, it can be extremely hard—and unsafe even—to express yourself, or even enjoy music in a public space." Maybe this makes some men sad, but I figure Liv is right. If I learned how to treat women from The Descendents or Screeching Weasel, bands I adored as a teen, I would be a creep. So yeah, it's cool that girls write songs and that BAGRC normalizes girls writing songs. Other cool stuff? An article about weed. You know, *dope smoke*. Pot! Reefer! Sticky icky shit, you know what I'm saying? Comes in teeny bags from guys named Matisse. C'mon kids, I ain't messin' around—I'm talking about drugs! Issue 420 had all that and more. Happy 35th birthday, *MRR*! –Jim Joyce (Maximum Rocknroll, maximumrocknroll.com)

MINIMUM ROCK + ROLL #8: A JOURNAL OF INDEPENDENT ROCK + ROLL, $1, 5½" x 4½", copied, 6 pgs.
This lil' guy is handwritten and hand arranged, and it makes for a cool aesthetic. Joshua Hoey riffs on the history of Long Island's Rok Lok Records (twenty years strong, m'dear) and the pleasure of cassettes—how they are less tacky than CDs, less expensive than vinyl. What do we learn about Rok Lok? Honestly, I can't really say one thing stood out. Bands were named, DIY's coolness was stated, all that kind of thing. Well, that's okay. It's a short zine. There are some record reviews, too. Here's some hot desert dirt about The Expos' latest release, *Perfect*: "Arizona's favorite underage rockers understand the value of brevity," and so does *Minimum Rock + Roll*! Yours for a dollar! –Jim Joyce (antiquatedfuture.com)

NIGHT HAG, $10, 5½" x 8½", LaserJet, 20 pgs.
Queer Witch Love Stories is just not a band name I have called dibs on, but also something that I want to see more of. This zine is a beautifully illustrated comic that deals with that exact premise, and really delivers in heart as well. Plus it includes a rest easy spell inside! Rayne Klar's work is beautiful, and I can't to see more! –Iggy Nicklbottum (Rayne Klar, proteinpress.com)

NOTHING TO SEE HERE, $5, 5½" x 8½", printed w/ glossy cover, 24 pgs.
A couple moves to the Morongo Basin to escape the Los Angeles lifestyle for a more humble life in the desert. Believing their stresses and unhappiness could be cured (or rearranged) by this change of life and scenery, the couple is caught off guard by the insanity and unsavoriness of their desert drinking neighbors, rednecks, and shady characters. Their own personal relationship problems are intensified by the removal of the city's busy distractions. They have only themselves, the sand, and the suffocating heat to be around. An accurate but fictional taste of how strange living in the high desert can be, this zine is only the first of a wider narrative available through the prolific self publisher, Space Cowboy Books. –Tricia Ramos (Nothing To See Here, 61871 29 Palms Hwy., Joshua Tree, CA 92252, spacecowboybooks.com)

PARANOIZE #44, $2, 5½" x 8½", copied, 24 pgs.
New Orleans' premier (and maybe only?) scene report, *Paranoize* is back with its standard list of bands and venues in the area, album reviews, and two extremely long interviews with bands Exhorder and Dead Horse. The pinnacle of fanboy-ing out on this issue, Bobby Bergeron just had too many questions they wanted to ask out of purely being pumped to interview both bands. A good issue if you're looking for in-depth interviews of these musicians. –Tricia Ramos (Paranoize, PO Box 2334, Marrero, LA 70073, paranoizenola.com)

I never knew candy could mean so much until I read this, and was reminded how the smallest things can bring huge friendships.
–Iggy Nicklbottum | SUGAR NEEDLE

PRESIDENT TOILET #3, $?, 5½" x 8½", copied, 50 pgs.
President Toilet is a comic series about a "cliché-spouting toilet-man." Half of the comics are just a page or two long, and all of 'em are slapstick and strange. I'm not super into jokey comics. As with Ziggy, most of them barely get a smile out of me because they're so predictable and pun-laden I feel like I should just watch *Friends* or something instead. *President Toilet* is… different? *PT* bombs the mayor, flushes his enemies, has a kink for hanging from hooks, and most of the people who populate his world are talking butts. A talking cigarette always seems to have his wee-wee out. In one scene, this character attacks a window display of wigs when he thinks he sees ELO front man, Jeff Lynne. And so, what can I say? *President Toilet* is like urine on the seat—an unpleasant surprise on a dark night. *Bon appétit!* –Jim Joyce (toiletprez@gmail.com)

RESTLESS LEGS: A PHOTO ZINE, pay what you can, 8½" x 5½", glossy, 24 pgs.
There's always one friend of the bunch who just won't stop taking everyone's picture. Photo zines like this are the result of that friend. The portraits in this zine are absolutely gorgeous; that alone makes it worth it. But they're not just gorgeous because of technical skill, they're gorgeous because though most only feature one person in each frame, the people are real and tell stories just by being there. Bryan's been making these zines for about a decade now, and they've followed him through just about everything and everywhere he's been. They're hopeful, fun, and full of love for the people he's photographing. They're also super sturdy, which is a good quality in a zine, and it's obvious care went into printing. For photography geeks, it was shot with 35mm film on a Pentax ME and Olympus XA. I know from experience trades are welcome for this one! –Jimmy Cooper (Bryan % Disgraceland, 2616 15th Ave S., Minneapolis, MN 55407)

SNAP! PHOTOZINE, $10, 8" x 8", printed w/ full color covers, 24 pgs.
From the opening photo of Alice Bag, a shot encompassing two pages of intensity; this photozine delivers. Each page is a live shot of different punk and hardcore bands, sweating and screaming in all their glory. Every photo lists the band's names, where the photo was shot, and the names of the band members. There's something about seeing these candid shots that puts you right into the

erik nervous, bikini cops, impotentie, the fritz, iss, freak genes, fashionism, the whiffs

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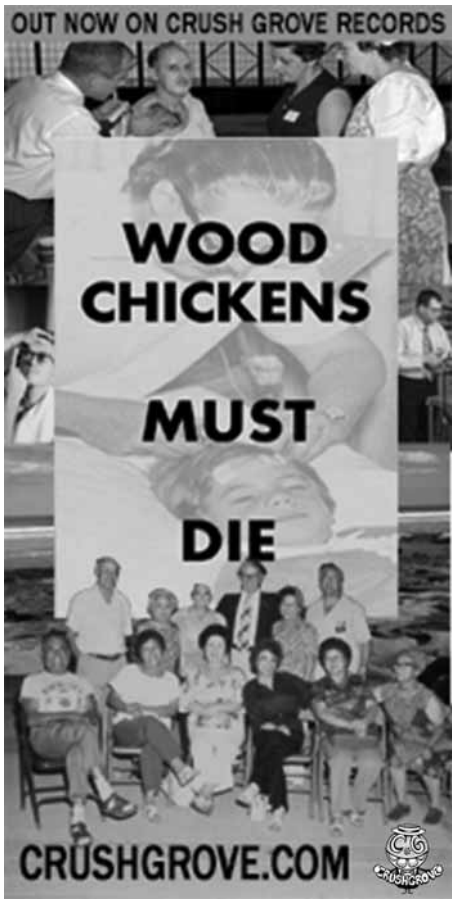

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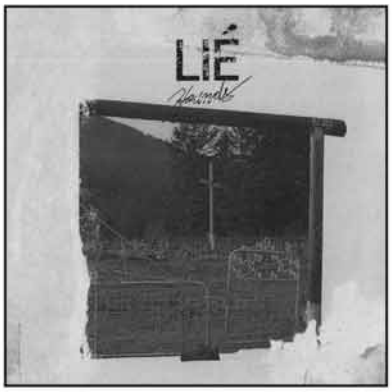

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middle of the show. As if you're smack dab in the center of the pit, you get the tactile sensations of all the smells and heat of each venue, the screeching of feedback, and the raw emotion of the bands. *SNAP!* transports you to a show, and leaves you there awestruck. –Tricia Ramos (Snap! Photozine, END FWY Press, PO Box 1794, San Pedro, CA 90733, endfwy.bigcartel.com)

STOWAWAYS, THE #17, $2-$3, 5 ½" x 8 ½", copied, 18 pgs.
The Stowaways is back after a four-year hiatus while Christopher finished college and did two years of service in the Peace Corps. This issue consists of show reviews and interviews, some of which he wrote before this stuff happened. Unfortunately, this comeback left something to be desired. The interviews were solid and in-depth, but the show reviews were a little bland in a "they were amazing" kind of way (and I'm not a big fan of show reviews as it is). I've enjoyed Christopher's writing in *Razorcake* and earlier issues of *The Stowaways,* but this one was a bit disappointing. –Craven Rock (The Stowaways, 960 E. Bonita Ave. Unit #120, Pomona, CA 91767)

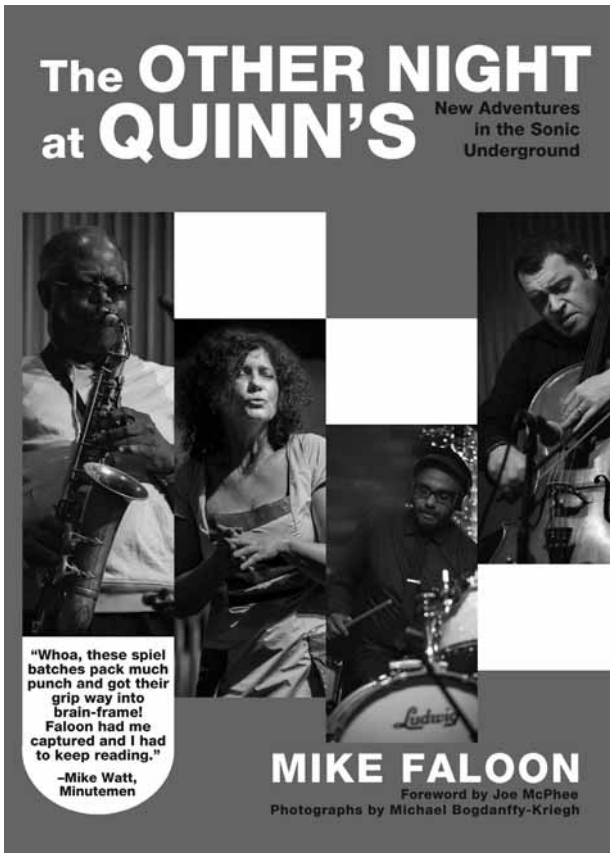
SUGAR NEEDLE #40, $4, 4¼" x 11", copied, 16 pgs.
Man, is this zine tall. I don't think I've seen another zine that was folded in half this way before, but it really caught my eye. Especially since the cover is so menacingly fun, with the creepy grandma giving chocolate to little demon children. *Sugar Needle* is a candy review zine in its fortieth release that's a collaboration between two friends who met through their love of candy, in an ad apparently! I never knew candy could mean so much until I read this, and was reminded how the smallest things can bring huge friendships. I reflected on this while reading the sometimes hilarious, sassy, and serious reviews of candies, and could feel the friendship these two have even though they live in two different states. Pick this up for a great view of the mind of candy fiends, who admit they have to cut their carbs sometimes. –Iggy Nicklbottum (Phlox Icona, 870 Ponce De Leon Ave., Decatur, GA 30030 / Corina Fastwolf, PO Box 66835 Portland, OR 97290)

TRANSGRESSION OR AFFIRMATION?,
$1 or stamps or trade, 5 ½" x 8 ½", copied, 6 pgs.
In a time when nothing is shocking, does transgressive art reaffirm the status quo? Does transgressive art challenge totalitarian structures or does it end up supporting them? In a somewhat inaccessible, academic way, Jason Rodgers looks at transgressive art like horror movies, industrial music, and the Church of Satan and questions its value. He feels "far too often the attempt to shock is a conformist tactic, because that material is just not shocking, it is the same thing you see in a tabloid." It's a timely essay. While we all love punk rock and scary movies, it must be noted, transgressive art has long created safe places for fascists like Boyd Rice and now it's being used by all these serial-masturbating, 4chan, alt-righters. Rodgers makes that case that, "what is needed is a positive use of transgression that could be active nihilism." –Craven Rock (Jason Rodgers, PO Box 10894, Albany, NY 12201)

TRUST #188, €3, offset, 8" x 11¼ ", 68 pgs.
I am almost certain that besides *MRR*, *Trust* is the longest-running zine in the world. The text is pretty much exclusively in German, so I can't personally say too much about it other than that it's nicely laid out. Formatted somewhat similarly to *Razorcake*, there are columns, articles, and reviews, with Quest for Rescue, Kink Records, Tics, O-Ton Musik, Stun, and Wolf Mountain being the main subjects in this issue. Major kudos is in order to *Trust* for staying in print for so long. It's beautiful! –Art Ettinger (Trust, Postfach 11 07 62, 28087 Bremen, Germany)

VELVETEEN ANGEL, $10, no trades, 5½" x 8½", glossy cover, glossy pages, 24 pgs.
A collection of stencil art ranging from 1991 to 2007, created by Victor Gastelum. To be able to create an effective stencil takes some foresight and craft, and Gastelum nails it every time. Stencils of wrestlers, men and women who look like they stepped out of the 1940s and '50s, along with some gun imagery (which was the weakest and most clichéd of an otherwise impressive body of work). –Matt Average (END FWY Press, PO Box 1794, San Pedro, CA 90733, endfwy.bigcartel.com)

YOU CAN WORK ANY HUNDRED HOURS A WEEK YOU WANT (IN YOUR UNDERWEAR)!!: HOW WE BUILT MICROCOSM PUBLISHING, 5½" x 4¼", offset, 58 pgs.
A history of Microcosm Publishing—told by founder Joe Biel and people who worked there. Starting with its small beginnings as a table at shows in Cleveland, to its near collapses, to finally turning into the solid, small press that it is today. Parts of it read like an oral history even it technically isn't one. It's a testament to dedication and big dreams you can read for an hour in your underwear, if you so choose. –Craven Rock (Microcosm)


The OTHER NIGHT at QUINN'S
New Adventures in the Sonic Underground
"Whoa, these spiel batches pack much punch and got their grip way into brain-frame! Faloon had me captured and I had to keep reading."
–Mike Watt, Minutemen
MIKE FALOON
Foreword by Joe McPhee
Photographs by Michael Bogdanffy-Kriegh

A New Razorcake/ Gorsky Press Book
by Mike Faloon

The Other Night at Quinn's is a fascinating window into a community of creators surviving beyond the mainstream in an otherwise overlooked outpost of the cultural underground that cuts across distinctions of culture, gender, race, age, and genre.

Mike Watt of the **Minutemen** exclaims, "Whoa, these spiel batches pack much punch and got their grip way into brain-frame! Faloon had me captured and I had to keep reading."

Wayne Kramer of the **MC5** adds that it's "...a deeply personal dive into the psyche of a hardcore music fanatic...utterly indispensable. A truly great read."

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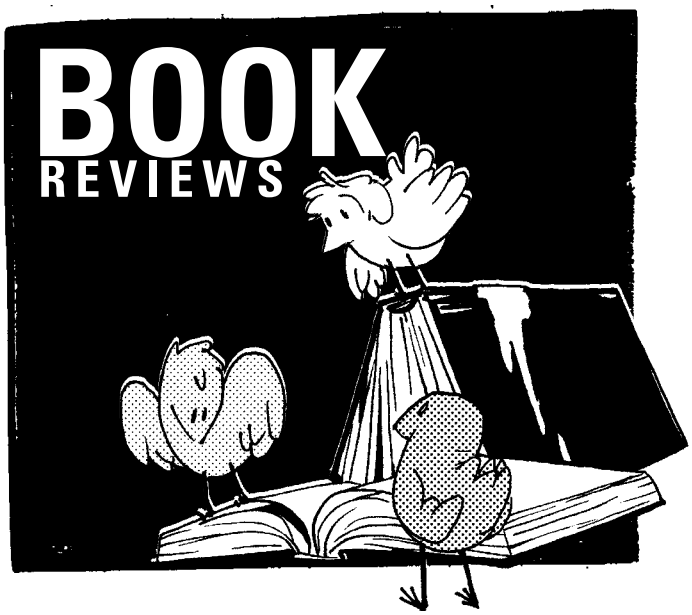

How Music Works
By David Byrne, 382 pgs.

When the original version of this book was published in 2012, I chose to give it a pass. I assumed it would be a collection of pretentious musings from someone operating at a distance from the culture of DIY musical production that I value. After an expanded second edition was released in 2017, I decided to give it a try and I'm glad I did. Best known as the singer and guitarist for the Talking Heads, David Byrne is a really smart and articulate writer with lots of great insights on a wide range of aspects regarding the intersection of music and modern society.

The books starts off a little rough, with Byrne riffing on the ways in which the creative process is influenced by things such as the architecture of performances spaces. It's an interesting idea that becomes belabored as if it was an inflated TED talk (turns out, that is exactly what it was). But then the book really starts to shine. The following chapter is entitled "My Life in Performance" and Bryne weaves together autobiographical anecdotes spanning his pre-Talking Heads ventures to recent solo outings, with serious research and deft insights.

Another chapter on "In the Recording Studio" was surprisingly informative, particularly his detailed discussion of his collaborations with Brian Eno. In general, the writing is highly accessible, but there are occasional clumsy sections where the writing seems a little too self-aware. I found the chapter on "Collaborations" a bit tedious and the chapter on "Building a Scene," which was based off an introduction for a coffee book on CBGB, a serious let-down. Surprisingly, given the richness of that scene, Bryne is probably at his most superficial in that chapter. But the bulk of the book offers thought-provoking passages on a range of topics related to music.

The chapters on how technology has impacted music were truly fascinating, with one dedicated to analog technology and another on digital innovations. The book is less a memoir than an original scholarly study, and Byrne is not opposed to referencing important scholarship and dropping in footnotes, but the prose rarely feels cumbersome or overly academic.

The chapter on "Business and Finances" was exceptionally well done, with Byrne offering the reader deep insights on, among other things, the range of ways in which musicians can make, market, and distribute their music, from the 360-degree deal that have been utilized by the Madonnas and the Jay-Zs of this world, all the way to DIY self-distribution. When he isn't sure of the specifics of a certain approach, he reproduces his conversations with experts like Mac McCaughan of Merge Records. Byrne concludes the chapter with in-depth dissections of his last two releases to show the specifics costs and sources of revenue, with fascinating insights.

Ultimately, the book is a little uneven, as has been Bryne's musical output. But he is on-point far more often than he isn't. Accessible, original, timely and fascinating are the adjectives that come to mind. And his promotion of DIY musical culture in the chapter "Amateurs!" would fit exceptionally well within the pages of *Razorcake*. I walked away learning a great deal, thinking in new ways, and having a deeper appreciation of Byrne himself. –Kevin Dunn (Three Rivers Press, crownpublishing.com)

Munmun
By Jesse Andrews, 404 pgs.

I know young adult literature contains a lot of dystopias. But how many of them are Marxist dystopias? Or are all dystopias Marxist, really?

And I need to annotate the above paragraph. "Young adult"—yes, *Munmun* was published as a young adult novel, but my introduction to this book was hearing author Jesse Andrews read the first chapter (at Flintridge Bookstore & Coffeehouse near Los Angeles), and it sounded to me like it was a science fiction novel written for everyone. And "Marxist"—even Marxists will agree that "Marxist" frequently means "tedious," which is not at all the case with *Munmun*.

Munmun doesn't extrapolate from our America to a future America. It's set in an America-like land in which people's sizes correspond with how much money they have, from littlepoors to middlepoors to middleriches to bigriches—according to the guide at the front of the book, littlepoors are larger than squirrels but smaller than full-grown cats. Munmun is money.

How will a twenty-first century young adult with regular access to social media respond to a politically bleak and angry novel like *Munmun*? I don't know. I do know that, at one point, following a political conversation between two of the characters, I had to stop reading and re-accept the truth that few activities are more difficult than getting poor people to vote. In *Munmun*, characters try to trade sex for advancement, and force people into sadistic videos—and the condescension: I'd forgotten (if I ever really knew) how much condescension comes with poverty.

> **"Marxist"—even Marxists will agree that "Marxist" frequently means "tedious," which is not at all the case with *Munmun*.**
>
> **–Jim Woster**
> *Munmun*

But enough about the novel's ideas. Vladimir Nabokov said, "Style and Structure are the essence of a book; great ideas are hogwash," and it's the language that makes this book. In addition to words like the above-mentioned "littlepoor" and "bigrich," much of the language takes oft-used current phrases and turns them into one word—"ofcourse," "afterall," "directdeposit," "selfsabotage"—which strikes me as something that might actually happen. Plus, in the tradition of old-school science fiction, Andrews creates words with built-in commentary, my favorite being "salesfriend" for sales clerk.

Politically, Jesse Andrews and science fiction writer Robert A. Heinlein couldn't be further apart, but with its language, *Munmun* belongs on the same shelf as Heinlein's *The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress*. Heinlein's novel is as libertarian as Andrews is Marxist, but both feature a hybrid English (Heinlein's is rhythmically Russian) and both feature elaborately created worlds, with immensely entertaining narratives. –Jim Woster (Amulet Books, amuletbooks.com)

Night Moves
By Jessica Hopper, 165 pgs.

Jessica Hopper's *Night Moves* operates in the dimension of impression: these microbursts of pithy sentiment, culled from Hopper's

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2004-2008ish journals, include dates, but don't need to. Her book is more about an epoch than specifics, a time when Hopper (who wrote a column for the dearly departed *Punk Planet* and authored the anthology *The First Collection of Criticism by a Living Female Rock Critic* a few years back) was putting out her excellent, hilarious fanzine *Hit It Or Quit It,* playing in bands, doing PR, and being the only sober person in a room full of drunk, stoned scene types who put plastic over their windows to keep the cold air from seeping into the kitchen of another janky Chicago punk house. By dint of your reading this review in this zine, it's likely that you live, or have lived, in such a place.

More, though, than just the identification with the general scenario, Hopper's vignettes weave in specific details. It's easy to remember times of yore through her recollections, even if the reader's details are a little different. Like the party I attended right after *Dear You* came out where the sounds of Led Zeppelin filled the crowded kitchen, and I first thought "Zeppelin rules," then "wait, they're not punk," then "wait, I'm in a Jawbreaker song." These vignettes are specific in ways that Razorcake readers will find familiar, if not comforting.

All told, the pieces of *Night Moves* gesture towards a time that eludes straight narrative. There's no way to construct a linear description of the day you get married, say, because it's so intense, a collection of luminous moments to be remembered in snippets rather than chronology. The best times and the worst times are like this. Rather than bogging readers down with the mundanity of the everyday, Hopper cuts right to the good stuff again and again, like a Lungfish record. Unlike Higgs and company, though, there's no repetition here, just a collection of lovely moments depicting a time in a place with a tight group of friends. Real names be proof, you dig? –Michael T. Fournier (University of Texas Press, utexas.press.com)

No Gods (Or: Peace without Fear or Bombs)
By Chari, 122 pgs.

Paressa is a twelfth grader at a public school in Canada. She worked at an ice cream shop until she got upset at the owner, who can't run a business. Later he's murdered in the alley behind a gay bar. Paressa gets a job at the library. Her coworkers like Bauhaus and The Cure. One of them is knowledgeable in the dark arts of buzz cuts. Paressa shaves her head. Principal Whyte is sympathetic. Sort of. Why, he asks Paressa, do you have to be a weirdo? She's like, "Listen pal, I'm myself, and you're a tool." Principal Whyte loves Jesus a whole lot. He ain't ashamed to crack on the loudspeaker and roll out the prayers. Paressa doesn't hate the big guy in the sky, but she does have integrity, and you're not supposed to spill the Jesus in a public school.

What happens next is Paressa and her friend, Wendy, decide to challenge Whyte by having Paressa run for student council president. And things go wild from there. We get Clash lyrics. We get shapeshifting cutie dudes who straddle the jock/punk line. We get cool librarians and Canadian history.

Author Chari is a bit of a mystery. What I know is that they have another book, *All I Care about Is Music*, and it's part one of five in a series called *Songs of Youth*. This book, *No Gods*, is part two. There's not a big reason for a thirty-something manbaby like myself to read about a teenage girl getting into punk, but I think I'd dig *No Gods* if I got it as a kid because I remember being really into Charles Romalotti's *Salad Days*, which is broadly similar. –Jim Joyce (Sabba-Too-Jee Books, 260 Adelaide street E., Box 62, Toronto, ON M5A 1N1, Canada)

Palaces
By Simon Jacobs, 248 pgs.

Stunningly literary, a bit horrific, and punk as all hell, *Palaces* by Simon Jacobs is just a little bit unforgettable. At first glance, it seems like your run-of-the-mill crust punk love story: a couple runs away from it all, have only each other in some weird little New York squat, loses said New York squat, and runs away from it all again… You get the picture. After this relatively "normal" beginning, *Palaces* rabbit-holes into a surreal trip through space and perception.

Richmond punks John and Joey hop on a train and chaos ensues in a series of abandoned mansions full of wolves, rooms painted like assorted gore and viscera, lost children, and the same knife, over and over again. Part fever dream, Palahniuk-esque horror novel, and meditation on relationships and distance, *Palaces* defies all expectations and demands to be seen. It doesn't care what you think. Action-packed sentences both drag on and draw the reader in; it left me lost but desperate to know what was going on. Clocking in at just under 250 pages, the novel is unexpectedly dense. It's less the kind of book you read on a lazy Sunday afternoon and more the kind of thing you read and tell all your friends just how deep and enlightening it is, when in reality you had no idea what was going on for the majority of the book.

That being said, even if it's a bit confusing and dense, it's a hell of an adventure to take. It would be deeply enjoyable to fans of books and movies like *Cloud Atlas, Cat's Cradle,* or other works that make you work for your intellectual bounty. Jacobs creates an atmosphere you can't help sinking fully into, even when it makes you want to vomit or turn away. Unraveling the truth of this work is rewarding and absolutely worth it, but I'm also a gigantic nerd for that sort of thing, so maybe take my words on the matter with a grain of salt. –Jimmy Cooper (Two Dollar Radio, twodollarradio.com)

I went back and listened to *Cut the Crap* for the first time in more than ten years. It's still awful.

–Michael T. Fournier

We Are The Clash: Reagan, Thatcher, and The Last Stand of a Band That Mattered

Recipe for Hate
By Warren Kinsella, 304 pgs.

Named after a Bad Religion song and album and based (albeit loosely) on true events, *Recipe for Hate* is perfect for those who like murder mysteries, punk rock, and kicking Nazi ass. The narrator, Kurt Blank, is a stand in for the author in his youth, even playing in the same band, The Hot Nasties, whose Invasion of the Tribbles 7" is real and available on Spotify.

Though *Recipe for Hate* is aimed at teens, the second novel in what is now dubbed The X Gang series, will be geared more towards adults, understandably so after the gorefest *Recipe for Hate* entails. The novel opens on X and Kurt playing a show with the Hot Nasties before it all goes wrong. At first, it seems like the kind of endearing, nostalgic novel you might get out of Frank Portman, but it becomes clear very early on that this is not the case. Kurt and X realize too late that the Hot Nasties' singer, Jimmy, is nowhere to be found. They find him in the alley in a crucifix position with a barbed-wire crown of thorns, and so the mystery unfolds as more gruesome murders come about, local white supremacist groups are discovered, and the cops, unsurprisingly, do absolutely nothing.

Prior to his YA debut, Kinsella published several nonfiction books about Canadian politics, including one about the Canadian far right, *Web of Hate*. Some of the events in Web of Hate formed the basis for this novel, but a lot of the violence and actions taken to counter it are a bit far-fetched and don't seem realistic even within the convoluted plot of the novel (notably, the events that didn't actually happen).

Recipe for Hate, though it falls flat at times, is increasingly relevant, with more "alt-right"ers and neo-Nazis coming out of the woodwork

every day. The book takes place in 1979 but the ideologies represented within did not seem at all unrealistic for 2018. It's certainly a novel for troubled times, and a scathing critique of—not even critique, call to arms against—white supremacists in religion and in power. The cast of punks and other sundry misfits Kinsella creates is fun, and it's a solid portrait of life in a town without too many punks. Give it a shot when you want something engaging and just a little out there. –Jimmy Cooper (Dundurn Press, dundurn.com)

We Are The Clash: Reagan, Thatcher, and The Last Stand of a Band That Mattered
By Mark Anderson and Ralph Heibutzki. 374 pg.

I'm ambivalent about The Clash. They have some good songs, and I feel like they're a band I *should* be crazy about, but their sloganeering leaves me empty. Plus, it's 2018 and I still can't get through *Sandinista!*

We Are The Clash chronicles the band's final chapters: longtime drummer Topper Headon gets kicked out for substance abuse problems in 1983 right before The Clash play Steve Wozniak's US Festival for a cool half million dollars (exactly half of what Van Halen makes the next day). The show is the last one for Mick Jones, who is summarily booted after the show and replaced with two new guitarists, ostensibly so Strummer, who's not much of a player, can be an unencumbered frontman. Jones's ousting coincides with longtime manager Bernie Rhodes becoming an even more McLaren-esque presence, calling the shots in the studio as the now five-piece Clash 2.0 struggles to deliver a follow up to *Combat Rock*, the group's most commercially successful record. To that end, Rhodes tyrannically dictates the band's songwriting, and enlists a bunch of ringers to play on *Cut the Crap*, the hot mess of an album producer Michael Fanye infused with bloopy canned beats. (I went back and listened to the record for the first time in more than ten years. It's still awful.)

Despite the presence of two authors on the cover, I'm assuming it's Anderson who writes mostly about The Clash because of his previous work, the excellent DC-centric *Dance of Days*. There's little objectivity in his delivery, as he describes, in sometimes purple prose, the new songs and performances the revamped band runs through. On the flip side of the coin, I assume it's mostly Heibutzki who writes about the socioeconomics of the times: Margaret Thatcher, still stinging from a series of defeats at the hands of the Labour party years earlier, goes all-out in her offensive on British coal miners, who strike in protest. On this side of the pond, Reagan is elected and nearly goads the Soviet Union into war.

I might be wrong about the roles I've assigned the dual authors. Regardless, the biggest failing of the book is the tenuous relation of the aforementioned socioeconomics to the story of the band: often, the political stories seem to run parallel to The Clash, with no real connection. Granted, this makes the occasional intersections powerful: the realization that The Clash, champions of the people, don't play a benefit for the miners until very late in their struggle was a shocking one. Still, a ton of time is spent on these topics, especially on the miners' strike—more connection would have helped the book feel cohesive.

But somehow that lack of cohesion kinda worked. It's Joe Strummer who's at the core of this book, trying like hell to write new songs, realizing he's cut off a limb by booting Mick Jones, and living with the pressure of being the titular figurehead of a group whose power has waned drastically. There's a palpable feeling of dread and foreboding throughout *We Are The Clash* as the band prepares to deliver the crap (sorry) which will fall into the CBS Records punchbowl. Give it up for the authors: they make me feel bad for Strummer as he disappears to Granada. And the book's great triumph is its depiction of The Clash's busking tour: the five go on the road with no money and play their songs acoustic around England for seventeen days. This sounds like the corny last resort of a band trying too hard—and the authors' comparing Strummer to Jesus adds to this—but I got online and listened to some of the audience tapes of the busking, and they kinda *rule*. In fact, a lot of the live stuff of the era is pretty good.

So for all my ambivalence about the band, all my skepticism about their motives and perceived poses, *We Are The Clash* made me re-immerse myself in the group's work, and made me reconsider them. Joe Strummer is depicted as deeply flawed, sincere, and, most of all, deeply human. It's that humanity—and the enthusiasm of the authors—which courses through the book, and made me consider and reconsider the band, despite my own skepticism. Which is something. –Michael T. Fournier (Akashic, akashicbooks.com)

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